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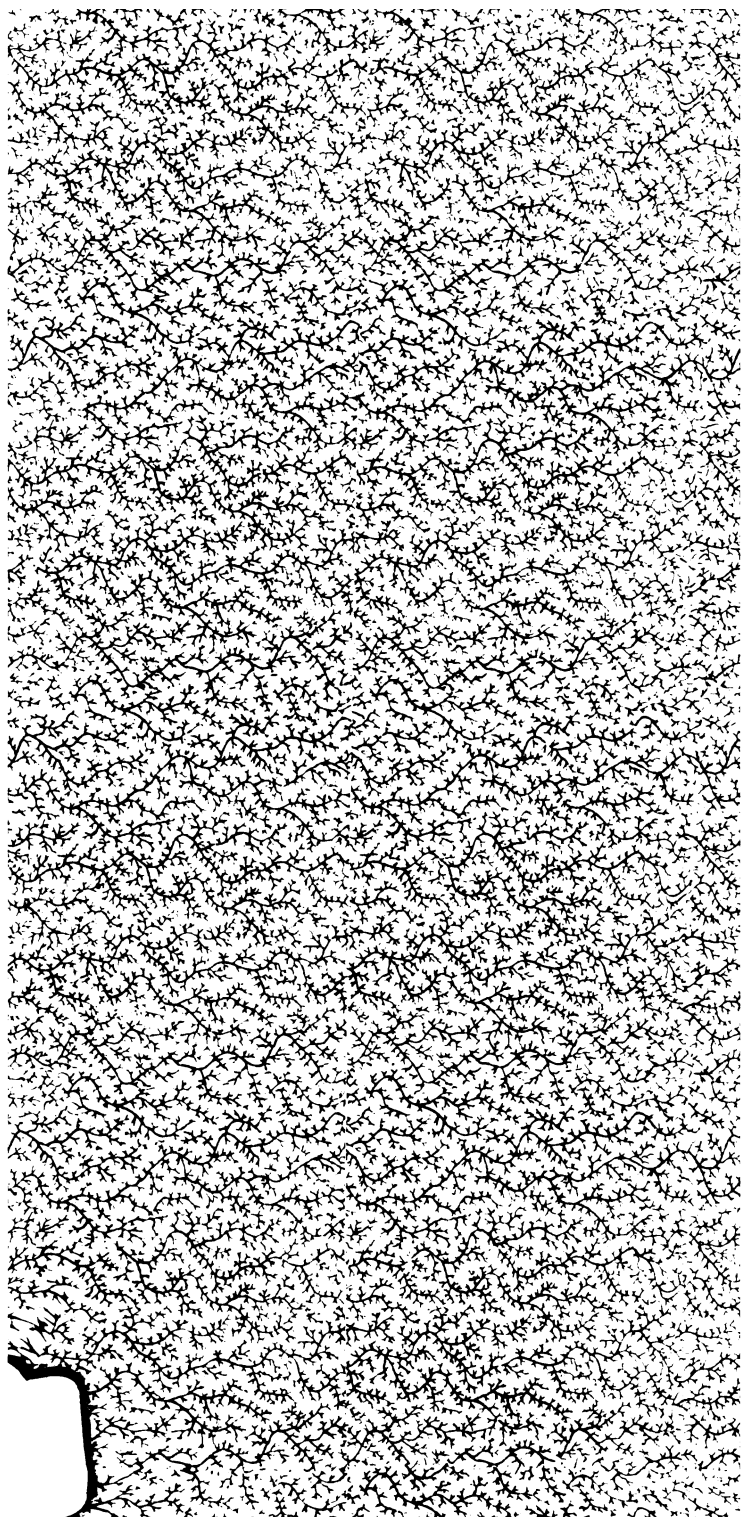
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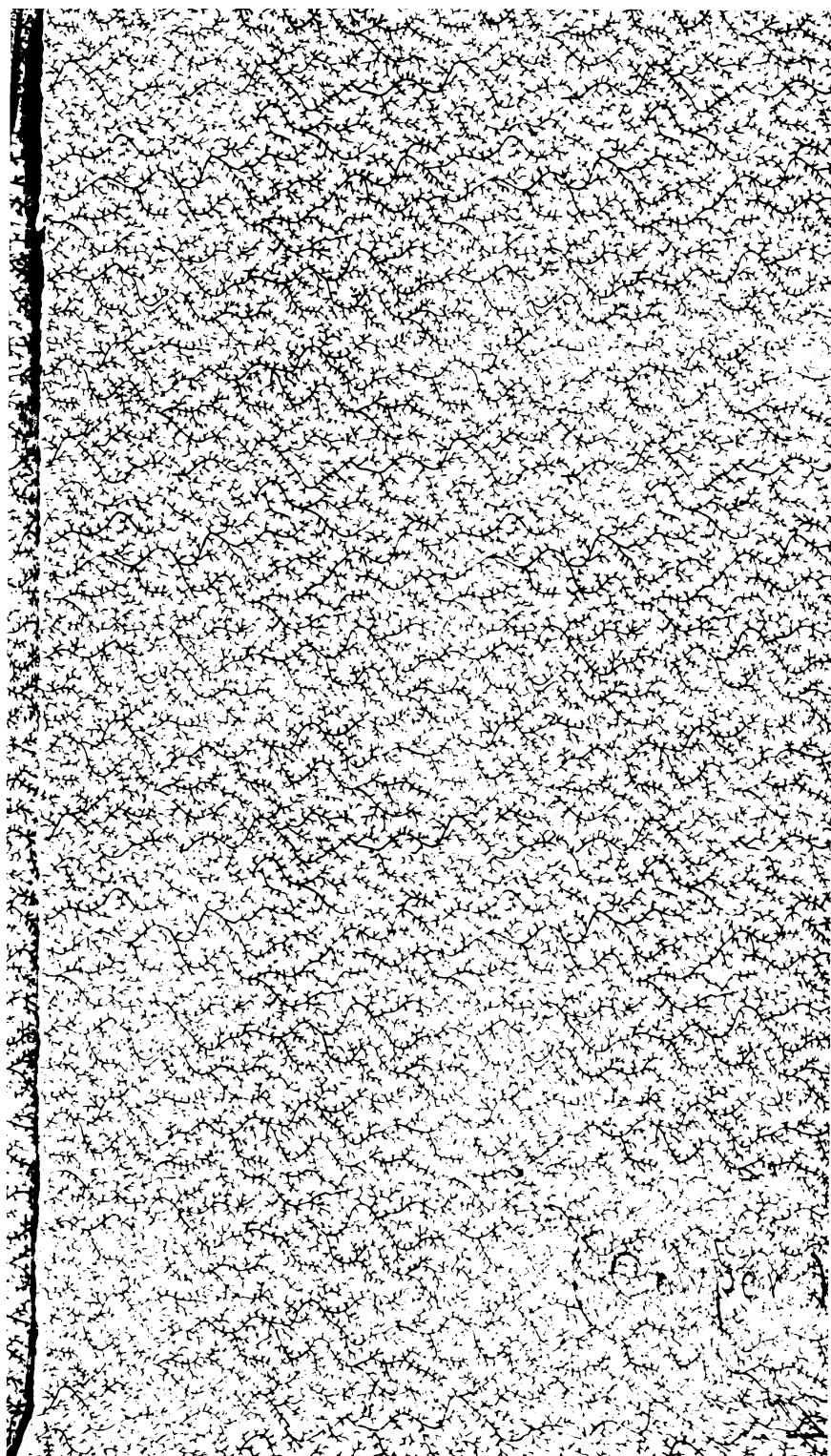
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PRIVATE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

WITH SEVERAL OF

HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS

IN THE POSSESSION OF HIS KINSMAN,

JOHN JOHNSON, LL. D.

RECTOR OF YAKHAM WITH WELBORNE IN NORFOLK.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.



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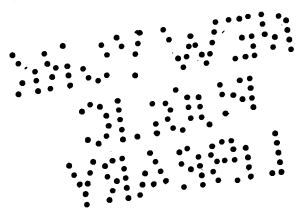
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TO
JOSEPH FOSTER BARHAM, ESQ.

ALLOW me, dear Sir, in presenting to the Public these hitherto unprinted Letters of the poet Cowper, to indulge my privilege as an Editor, and the personal feelings by which I am actuated towards yourself, by inscribing them to you. The interest attached to the name of COWPER will, I trust, render this tribute of respect not unacceptable ; while it gratifies me highly to have thus an opportunity of assuring you of the grateful regard and sincere esteem with which I subscribe myself,

My dear Sir,
your obliged and
affectionate friend,
J. JOHNSON.

Yaxham Parsonage, December 10, 1823.

2021

PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

THE idea of this publication first occurred to me, on perusing some letters of Cowper to his estimable friend Mr. Hill, which had not appeared in Mr. Hayley's Life of him. It struck me, that, with the aid of a few from other sources, I might be able to present the public with an additional collection of those admired productions. Through the kindness of the Rev. Thomas Bull, Mrs. Unwin, Mrs. Smith, and the Rev. Professor Martyn, I was soon supplied with materials for that agreeable undertaking; for which I beg leave to offer them my grateful acknowledgments. To Mrs. Hill I am especially indebted; her obliging communication of the letters above mentioned having eventually led to my acquisition of the others.

As the letters in the present volume are addressed to the same persons (with the exception of Mrs. King) as those in the former, it may be needless to observe that they were equally submitted to the selecting

hand of Mr. Hayley. But, lest the reader should suspect, that, having cropped the flower of the collection, my lamented friend, the biographer, has left me only refuse to present to him, I am desirous of interposing a few remarks in their favour.

By far the greater part of them are of a lively description, exhibiting frequent marks of that playful humour which is so peculiar to the letters of Cowper, and of which Mr. Hayley has preserved so many specimens in the former volumes. That, indeed, is the only ground on which I can account for his suppression of several that will be found in the following pages. It was necessary to observe a measure, in the admission of letters into his biographical work, and not to insert all which he might otherwise approve, lest the narrative should be overborne by the epistolary part of his publication. At the same time I am ready to concede, ~~that there are some~~ letters, especially in the early part of this collection, which were probably rejected as comparatively trifling. But as these have all, more or less, ~~some~~ characteristic turn, either of thought or expression, I have ventured to introduce them to the reader's notice.

A few, and but a few, are of a political nature. The subjects, however, of these had so long ceased to interest the public, that, having preserved some of a similar description, it was not likely that Mr. Hayley should be tempted to multiply them. But as the

reader may be curious to know more of what Cowper thought of the men and measures of those times, than his biographer has furnished, I have ventured to insert them; especially, as I wish this collection to have, as much as may be, the air, both as to opinions and events, of a supplementary life of the writer.

And lastly, there are many letters addressed to Mr. Newton, with two or three to Mr. Bull, on the subject of religion; which, though not of general application, but confined to its aspect on the mind of the writer, were decidedly worthy of Mr. Hayley's insertion; and the more so, indeed, on that very account; his concern, as biographer, being rather with the individual than the community. But these, out of tenderness to the feelings of the reader, I am persuaded, and for the gloominess they attach to the writer's mind, he has utterly excluded. In doing this, however, amiable and considerate as his caution must appear, the gloominess which he has taken from the mind of Cowper, has the effect of involving his character in obscurity. People read "the Letters" with "the Task" in their recollection, (and vice versâ,) and are perplexed. They look for the Cowper of each, in the other, and find him not. The correspondence is destroyed. Hence the character of Cowper is undetermined; mystery hangs over it; and the opinions formed of him are as various as the minds of the enquirers. That I am not singular in deduc-

ing these consequences from the suppression of the gloomy, but, in many instances, strikingly pious passages, restored in the present Volume, I am warranted to assert, on the authority of a highly esteemed friend, a man justly valued for his attainments in theological knowledge, and extensively acquainted with the state of religious opinions.* In alluding to these suppressed letters, he emphatically says, "Cowper will never be clearly and satisfactorily understood without them, and they should be permitted to exist, for the demonstration of the case. I know the importance of it, from numerous conversations I have had, both in Scotland and England, on this most interesting subject. Persons of truly religious principles, as well as those of little or no religion at all, have greatly erred in their estimate of this great and good man."

Having thus bespoke the reader's attention to these restored letters of Cowper to Mr. Newton, on the ground of their illustrative tendency, I would engage it still further, from a consideration of their beauty. And here I account myself particularly fortunate, in being favoured with the opinion of confessedly one of the best judges of composition that this country has to boast—the Rev. Robert Hall, of Leicester. In a letter addressed to me, on the nineteenth of August of the present year, he writes thus:

* The Rev. Legh Richmond.

"It is quite unnecessary to say that I perused the letters with great admiration and delight. I have always considered the letters of Mr. Cowper as the finest specimen of the epistolary style in our language; and *these* appear to me of a superior description to the former, possessing as much beauty with more piety and pathos. To an air of inimitable ease and carelessness, they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. I have scarcely found a single word which is capable of being exchanged for a better.

* * * *

"Literary errors I can discern none. The selection of words and the structure of the periods are inimitable; they present as striking a contrast as can well be conceived, to the turgid verbosity which passes at present for fine writing, and which bears a great resemblance to the degeneracy which marks the style of Ammianus Marcellinus, as compared to that of Cicero or of Livy. A perpetual effort and struggle is made to supply the place of vigour, garish and dazzling colours are substituted for chaste ornament, and the hideous distortions of weakness for native strength. In my humble opinion, the study of Cowper's prose may, on this account, be as useful in forming the taste of young people as his poetry."

* * * *

“That the letters will afford great delight to all persons of true taste, and that you will confer a most acceptable present on the reading world by publishing them, will not admit of a doubt.”

To this testimony to the merits of the epistolary style of Cowper from so high an authority, it would be the extreme of presumption in me to add a syllable. There is one subject, however, connected, if not with the composition, yet with the matter of these letters to Mr. Newton, to which I would beg to call a few minutes' attention;—the aberration of mind which they so painfully develop. To this was indisputably owing all the gloominess of the character of Cowper: a point which I am the more anxious to establish, as it has been erroneously charged on his religious opinions. But no—the unhappiness of this amiable man is to be referred to the cause already stated; and that again, to an excess of hypochondriacal affection, induced, in the first instance, as I have repeatedly heard a deceased friend of his and mine observe, by his having, in very early life, improperly checked an erysipelatous complaint of the face; which rendered him ever after liable to depression of spirits. Under the influence of one of these attacks, attended with evident mental obliquity, he was impressed with an idea, originating in a supposed voice from heaven, that the Author of his life had recalled the loan. This was rapidly followed by another, to this effect;—That as he had fail-

ed to restore it, in the intervening moment, the punishment of his disobedience would be everlasting destruction.

Now, I would ask those who have inadvertently charged the unhappiness of this pitiable sufferer on his religious opinions, to the operation of what theological tenets they can warrantably ascribe the supposition, not only of so preposterous a demand, but of a denunciation, under such circumstances, more preposterous still, as referred to the Supreme Being?—It will be readily conceded, I trust, that, as no known system of divinity can be justly charged with such absurd principles as the above supposition would imply, so that which Cowper adopted, (whatever it might be,) and through the influence of which on his divine poem “The Task” he obtained the high eulogium of being

“With more than painter’s fancy blest, with lays
Holy as saints to heav’n expiring raise,”*

unquestionably cannot. And if this be granted, his unhappiness must undoubtedly be referred solely to his aberration of mind.†

* Pursuits of Literature.

† See more on this subject in the sketch of the Life of Cowper, prefixed to the third volume of his Poems, 8vo edit. p. 17—12mo. p. 19.

Having conscientiously endeavoured, however feebly, to exculpate the religious opinions of Cowper from the charge of originating his mental distress, I am anxious to anticipate an important question, in reference to the desponding letters. Am I not afraid, it may be asked, lest, in affording an indiscriminate inspection into the gloomy interior of Cowper's mind, I should minister to the melancholy contemplations of some depressed spirit, and thus eventually assimilate it to his own? I answer, I should indeed fear it, but for the circumstance already mentioned; the striking irregularity of the writer's intellect on the subject of his own salvability. This is the frame, if I may so express it, in which all his gloomy pictures are *conspicuously set*; and as they cannot be separated, they must be transferred, both or neither, to the mind of another. But as experience teaches me that insanity is not transferable, so I set my heart at rest as to a transfer of the gloom, which in this case resulted from it.

Should the eye, therefore, of any desponding person meet the letters alluded to, whilst he remembers the circumstances under which they were written, let him, in the exercise of the virtues, and genuine though gloomy piety which they exhibit, anticipate a happy issue, sooner or later, out of all his afflictions, through the same Hand which delivered Cowper,

Though sunk "beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he."*

On casting my eye over one of the former volumes, I discovered that I had accidentally sent a letter to the press which was already before the public. I was led into this mistake through the inaccuracy either of Mr. Hayley's amanuensis, or his printer, in regard to dates. Not finding it under his real one of February 6, 1781, I naturally concluded that it had not been printed; but it afterwards appeared, though too late to be recalled, under July 6, of the same year. It might have been expected, indeed, that, having myself edited the volumes alluded to, I should have been aware of its previous insertion; but the truth is, the manuscript letters being as familiar to me as the published, and undistinguished in my mind, in preparing the former for the press, I depended wholly on the dates of the latter.

But for the above detection, I should have been betrayed into similar repetitions afterwards. I trust, however, that through the watchfulness it excited, the duplicate above mentioned will prove a solitary instance.

From this and other causes, the editing these letters has been a work of labour to me; but it has been a pleasant one. It has recalled to my recol-

* See the affecting lines, entitled "The Castaway."—Cowper's Poems, vol. iii.

lection times and places, long past and lost sight of, but never to be forgotten; and by the help of an elegant little volume, in which the scenery about Olney and Weston is faithfully delineated, has at intervals, almost beguiled me into an imagination that I was still there, and my revered relative with me.*

Having exercised the mind of the reader with recitals not of the most enlivening tone, I may have thereby unfitted it for an entrance on the sprightly letters at the commencement of this volume. As a prelude, therefore, to those playful epistolary specimens, I will present him with one which, for an obvious reason, I could not introduce into the work itself, but which may find an appropriate insertion here. It not only shews, as my obliging friend Mr. Hall observed to me, "how gracefully the author could trifle, but displays a pleasing wildness of imagination." It is of an older date than any of the other letters, having been written when Cowper was a young man in the Temple, as a contribution to the "Nonsense Club," of which he reminds Mr. Hill in the former collection, and of which themselves, Bonnel Thornton, Lloyd, and the elder Colman, were members.†

* "The Rural Walks of Cowper." By J. and H. S. Storer, Pentonville.

† Vol. ii. letter 222.

LETTER FROM AN OWL TO A BIRD OF PARADISE.

SIR,

I have lately been under some uneasiness at your silence, and began to fear that our friends in Paradise were not so well as I could wish; but I was told yesterday that the pigeon you employed as a carrier, after having been long pursued by a hawk, found it necessary to drop your letter, in order to facilitate her escape. I send you this by the claws of a distant relation of mine, an eagle, who lives on the top of a neighbouring mountain. The nights being short at this time of the year, my epistle will probably be so too; and it strains my eyes not a little to write, when it is not as dark as pitch. I am likewise much distressed for ink: the blackberry juice which I had bottled up having been all exhausted, I am forced to dip my beak in the blood of a mouse, which I have just caught; and it is so very savoury, that I think in my heart I swallow more than I expend in writing. A monkey who lately arrived in these parts, is teaching me and my eldest daughter to dance. The motion was a little uneasy to us at first, as he taught us to stretch our wings wide, and to turn out our toes; but it is easier now. I, in particular, am a tolerable proficient in a hornpipe, and can foot it very nimbly with a switch tucked under my left wing, considering

my years and infirmities. As you are constantly gazing at the sun, it is no wonder that you complain of a weakness in your eyes; how should it be otherwise, when mine are none of the strongest, though I always draw the curtains over them as soon as he rises, in order to shut out as much of his light as possible? We have had a miserable dry season, and my ivy-bush is sadly out of repair. I shall be obliged to you if you will favour me with a shower or two, which you can easily do, by driving a few clouds together over the wood, and beating them about with your wings till they fall to pieces. I send you some of the largest berries the bush has produced, for your children to play withal. A neighbouring physician, who is a goat of great experience, says they will cure the worms; so if they chance to swallow them, you need not be frightened. I have lately had a violent fit of the pip, which festered my rump to a prodigious degree. I have shed almost every feather in my tail, and must not hope for a new pair of breeches till next spring; so shall think myself happy if I escape the chincough, which is generally very rife in moulting season.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

MADGE.

P. S.—I hear my character as first minister is a good deal censured; but “Let them censure; what care I?”

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PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

Huntingdon, July 3, 1765.

WHATEVER you may think of the matter, it is no such easy thing to keep house for two people. A man cannot always live like the lions in the Tower; and a joint of meat, in so small a family, is an endless incumbrance. In short, I never knew how to pity poor housekeepers before; but now I cease to wonder at that politic cast which their occupation usually gives to their countenance, for it is really a matter full of perplexity.

I have received but one visit since here I came. I don't mean that I have refused any, but that only one has been offered. This was from my woollen-drawer; a very healthy, wealthy, sensible, sponable man, and extremely civil. He has a cold bath, and has promised me a key of it, which I shall probably make use of in the winter. He has undertaken, too, to get me the St. James's Chronicle three times a-week, and to shew me Hinchinbrook House, and to do every service for me in his power; so that I did not exceed the truth, you see, when I spoke of his civility. Here is a card-assembly, and a dancing-assem-

bly, and a horse-race, and a club, and a bowling-green, so that I am well off, you perceive, in point of diversions; especially as I shall go to 'em, just as much as I should if I lived a thousand miles off. But no matter for that; the spectator at a play is more entertained than the actor; and in real life it is much the same. You will say, perhaps, that if I never frequent these places, I shall not come within the description of a spectator; and you will say right. I have made a blunder, which shall be corrected in the next edition.

You are old dog at a bad tenant; witness my uncle's and your mother's geese and gridirons. There is something so extremely impertinent in entering upon a man's premises, and using them without paying for 'em, that I could easily resent it if I would. But I rather choose to entertain myself with thinking how you will scour the man about, and worry him to death, if once you begin with him. Poor toad! I leave him entirely to your mercy.

My dear Joe, you desire me to write long letters—I have neither matter enough, nor perseverance enough for the purpose. However, if you can but contrive to be tired of reading as soon as I am tired of writing, we shall find that short ones answer just as well; and, in my opinion, this is a very practicable measure.

My friend Colman has had good fortune; I wish him better fortune still; which is, that he may make a right use of it. The tragedies of Lloyd and Bensley are both very deep. If they are not of use to the surviving part of the society, it is their own fault.

I was debtor to Bensley seven pounds, or nine, I forget which. If you can find out his brother, you will do me a great favour if you will pay him for me; but do it at your leisure.

Yours and * theirs,

W. C.

* The author is supposed to mean Mrs. Hill and her two daughters. The word *theirs* cannot so well refer to the last antecedent, the persons who stand in that relation with it being both dead at the time he wrote, as is evident from the context.

LIPSIVS.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

August 14, 1765.

Both Lady Hesketh and my brother had apprised me of your intention to give me a call; and herein I find they were both mistaken. But they both informed me, likewise, that you were already set out for Warwickshire; in consequence of which latter intelligence, I have lived in continual expectation of seeing you, any time this fortnight. Now, how these two ingenious personages (for such they are both) should mistake an expedition to French Flanders for a journey to Warwickshire, is more than I, with all my ingenuity, can imagine. I am glad, however, that I have still a chance of seeing you, and shall treasure it up amongst my agreeable expectations. In the mean time, you are welcome to the British shore, as the song has it, and I thank you for your epitome of your travels. You don't tell me how you escaped the vigilance of the custom-house officers, though I dare say you were knuekle-deep in contrabands, and had your boots stuffed with all and all manner of unlawful wares and merchandizes.

You know, Joe, I am very deep in debt to my little physician at St. Albans, and that the handsomest thing I can do will be to pay him *le plutôt qu'il sera possible*, (this is vile French, I believe, but you can, now, correct it.) My brother informs me that you have such a quantity of cash in your hands, on my

account, that I may venture to send him forty pounds immediately. This, therefore, I shall be obliged if you will manage for me ; and when you receive the hundred pounds, which my brother likewise brags you are shortly to receive, I shall be glad if you will discharge the remainder of that debt, without waiting for any further advice from your humble servant.

I am become a professed horseman, and do hereby assume to myself the style and title of the Knight of the Bloody Spur. It has cost me much to bring this point to bear ; but I think I have at last accomplished it.

My love to all your family.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

Nov. 5, 1765.

I wrote to you about ten days ago,

Soliciting a quick return of gold,

To purchase certain horse that like me well.

Either my letter or your answer to it, I fear, has miscarried. The former, I hope ; because a miscarriage of the latter might be attended with bad consequences.

I find it impossible to proceed any longer in my present course, without danger of bankruptcy. I have therefore entered into an agreement with the Rev. Mr. Unwin, to lodge and board with him. The family are the most agreeable in the world. They live in a special good house, and in a very genteel way. They are all exactly what I would wish them to be, and I know I shall be as happy with them as I can be on this side of the sun. I did not dream of this matter till about five

days ago : but now the whole is settled. I shall transfer myself thither as soon as I have satisfied all demands upon me here.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS,

Nov. 8, 1765.

Notwithstanding it is so agreeable a thing to read Law Lectures to the Students of Lyons' Inn, especially to the reader himself, I must beg leave to waive it. Danby Pickering must be the happy man ; and I heartily wish him joy of his deputyship. As to the treat, I think if it goes before the lecture, it will be apt to blunt the apprehension of the students ; and if it comes after, it may erase from their memories impressions so newly made. I could wish, therefore, that for their benefit and behoof, this circumstance were omitted. But if it be absolutely necessary, I hope Mr. Salt, or whoever takes the conduct of it, will see that it be managed with the frugality and temperance becoming so learned a body. I shall be obliged to you if you will present my respects to Mr. Treasurer Salt, and express my concern, at the same time, that he had the trouble of sending me two letters upon this occasion. The first of them never came to hand.

I think the Welshman must *morris* ;—what think you ? If he withdraws to his native mountains we shall never catch him ; so the best way is to let him run in debt no longer.

As to E—, if he will listen to any thing, it must be to a remonstrance from you. A letter has no more effect upon him, than a messenger sent up to a paper kite ; and he will make me pay the postage of all my epistles into the bargain.

I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me whether my exchequer is full or empty, and whether the revenue of last year is yet come in, that I may proportion my payments to the exigencies of my affairs.

My dear Sephus, give my love to your family, and believe me much obliged to you for your invitation. At present I am in such an unsettled condition, that I can think of nothing but laying the foundation of my future abode at Unwin's. My being admitted there, is the effect of the great good-nature and friendly turn of that family, who, I have great reason to believe, are as desirous to do me service as they could be after a much longer acquaintance. Let your next, if it comes a week hence, be directed to me there.

The greatest part of the law books are those which Lord Cowper gave me. Those, and the very few I bought myself, are all at the Major's service.

Stroke puss's back the wrong way and it will put her in mind of her master.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS,

Dec. 3, 1765.

That I may return as particular an answer to your letter as possible, I will take it *item* by *item*.

First, then, I rejoice with you in the victory you have obtained over the Welshman's pocket. The reluctance with which he pays and promises to pay, gives me but little concern, further than as it seems to threaten you with the trouble of many

fruitless applications hereafter, in the receipt of my lordship's rents.

Secondly, I am glad that you have received some money on my account; and am still more pleased that you have so much in bank, after the remittances already made. But that which increases my joy to the highest pitch of possible augmentation, is, that you expect to receive more shortly.

Thirdly, I should be quite in raptures with the fair promises of Mr. E—, if I believed he was in earnest. But the propensity of that gentleman to indulge himself in a jocular humour upon these serious occasions, though it is very entertaining, is not quite so good a joke as the performance of those promises would be. But men of wit are apt to be a little whimsical.

Fourthly, I do recollect that I myself am a little guilty of what I blame so much in Mr. E—: in the last letter I wrote you, having returned you so facetious an answer to your serious enquiry concerning the entertainment to be given, or not to be given, to the gentlemen of New Inn, that you must needs have been at a loss to collect from it my real intentions. My sincere desire, however, in this respect is, that they may fast; and being supported in this resolution, not only by an assurance that I can, and therefore ought to make a better use of my money, but also by the examples of my predecessors in the same business, Mr. Barrington and Mr. Schutz, I have no longer any doubt concerning the propriety of condemning them to abstinence upon this occasion; and cannot but wish that point may be carried, if it can be done without engaging you in the trouble of any disagreeable haggling, and higgling, and twisting, and wriggling, to save my money.

Lastly, if I am not mistaken, I owe Thurlow five guineas. Be so kind as to pay him when he happens to fall in your way.

Yours, my dear Joe,

W. C.

The fire of the general election begins to smoke here already.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS,

Oct. 27, 1766.

If every dealer and chapman was connected with creditors like you, the poor commissioners of bankrupts would be ruined. I can only wonder at you, considering my knack at running in debt, and my slender ability to pay. After all, I am afraid that the poor stock must suffer. * * * * *

* * * * * My finances will never be able to satisfy these craving necessities, without leaving my debt to you entirely unsatisfied. And though I know you are sincere in what you say, and as willing to wait for your money as heart can wish, yet *quære*, whether the next half year, which will bring its expenses with it, will be more propitious to you than the present? The succeeding half years may bear a close resemblance to their insolvent predecessors continually; and unless we break bank some time or other, your proposal of payment may be always what it is at present. What matters it, therefore, to relieve the stock, which must come to execution at last.

I am heartily glad my uncle* has recovered his spirits; and desire you will remember me to all your associates at Taplow. I sympathise with you upon the fugitive nature of the longest vacation, and wish, for your sake, that the chancellor would pack up his great seal, and hold his court in your neighbourhood.

Yours ever,

W. C.

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

May 14, 1767.

I only know that I was once the happy owner of a red-leather trunk, and that my brother, when I first saw him at Cambridge, upon my enquiring after my papers, &c., told me that in a red-leather trunk they were all safely deposited. The whole contents of it are little worth, and if I never see them more, I shall be but very moderately afflicted by the loss, though I fancy the trunk upon the road will prove to be the very trunk in question.

Together with your letter came a bill from my quondam hosier, in Fleet-street, Mr. Reynolds, for the sum of two pounds ten shillings, desiring present payment, cash being scarce. I sent him an order for the money by this day's post. My future expenses in the hosiery way will be small, for Mrs. Unwin knits all my stockings, and would knit my hats too, if that were possible.

I imagine my brother will be in town about midsummer, when he will be able to confer with you upon the subject of the inexorable Mr. E——, more to the purpose than I can by letter.

Having commenced gardener, I study the arts of pruning, sowing, and planting; and enterprise every thing in that way, from melons down to cabbages. I have a large garden to display my abilities in, and, were we twenty miles nearer London, I might turn higgler, and serve your honour with cauliflowers, and brocoli, at the best hand. I shall possibly now and then desire you to call at the seed-shop, in your way to Westminster, though sparingly. Should I do it often, you

would begin to think you had a mother-in-law at Berkhamstead.*

Yours, dear Joe,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

June 16, 1767.

This part of the world is not productive of much news, unless the coldness of the weather be so, which is excessive for the season. We expect, or rather experience a warm contest between the candidates for the county: the preliminary movements of bribery, threatening, and drunkenness, being already taken. The Sandwich interest seems to shake, though both parties are very sanguine. Lord Carysfort is supposed to be in great jeopardy, though as yet, I imagine, a clear judgment cannot be formed; for a man may have all the noise on his side, and yet lose his election. You know me to be an uninterested person, and I am sure I am a very ignorant one in things of this kind. I only wish it was over, for it occasions the most detestable scene of profligacy and riot that can be imagined.

Yours ever,

W. C.

* The writer's father having been rector of Berkhamstead, this probably alludes to the numerous commissions which his friend would recollect he had to execute, when resident in the Temple, for his surviving partner.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

Olney, Oct. 10, 1767.

One more law question ; and I believe the last,—A man holds lands in the right of his wife, the rents payable half-yearly, viz. at Lady-day, and Michaelmas ; dies in July. Are not the rising rents the property of the widow ? I mean, the rent of the whole last half year. You are a better counsellor than I was, but I think you have much such a client in me, as I had in Dick Harcourt. Much good may do you with me !

I have no map to consult, at present, but by what remembrance I have of the situation of this place in the last I saw, it lies at the northernmost point of the county. We are just five miles beyond Newport Pagnell. I am willing to suspect that you make this enquiry with a *view* to an *interview*, when time shall serve. We may possibly be settled in our own house in about a month, where so good a friend of mine will be extremely welcome to Mrs. Unwin. We shall have a bed, and a warm fire-side, at your service, if you can come before next summer ; and if not, a parlour that looks the north wind full in the face, where you may be as cool as in the groves of Valombrosa.

Yours, my dear Sephus,
affectionately ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

Oct. 20, 1768.

By this time, I presume, you are returned to the precincts of the law. The latter end of October, I know, generally puts an end to your relaxations ; such as reading upon sunshiny banks, and contemplating the clouds, as you lie upon your back.

Permit it to be one of the *aliena negotia centum*, which are now beginning to buzz in your ears, to send me a twenty pound note by the first opportunity. I beg my affectionate respects to my friends in Cook's-court, and am, dear Sephus,

Yours sincerely,

W. C.

 TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

Jan. 21, 1769.

I rejoice with you in your recovery, and that you have escaped from the hands of one from whose hands you will not always escape. Death is either the most formidable, or the most comfortable thing, we have in prospect, on this side of eternity. To be brought near to him, and to discern neither of these features in his face, would argue a degree of insensibility, of which I will not suspect my friend, whom I know to be a thinking man. You have been brought down to the sides of the grave, and you have been raised again by Him who has the keys of the invisible world ; who opens and none can shut, who shuts, and none can open. I do not forget to return thanks to him on your behalf, and to pray that your life, which He

has spared, may be devoted to his service. "Behold ! I stand at the door and knock," is the word of Him, on whom both our mortal and immortal life depend, and blessed be his name ; it is the word of one who wounds only that He may heal, and who waits to be gracious. The language of every such dispensation is, "Prepare to meet thy God." It speaks with the voice of mercy and goodness, for without such notices, whatever preparation we might make for other events, we should make none for this. My dear friend, I desire and pray, that when this last enemy shall come to execute an *unlimited* commission upon us, we may be found ready, being established and rooted in a well-grounded faith in His name, who conquered and triumphed over him upon his Cross.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOE,

Jan. 29, 1769.

I have a moment to spare, to tell you that your letter is just come to hand, and to thank you for it. I do assure you, the gentleness and candour of your manner engages my affection to you very much. You answer with mildness to an admonition, which would have provoked many to anger. I have not time to add more, except just to hint, that if I am ever enabled to look forward to Death with comfort, which, I thank God, is sometimes the case with me, I do not take my view of it from the top of my own works and deservings, though God is witness that the labour of my life is to keep a conscience void of offence towards Him. He is always formidable to me,

but when I see him disarmed of his sting, by having sheathed it in the body of Christ Jesus.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE,

August 27, 1771.

I take a friend's share in all your concerns, so far as they come to my knowledge, and consequently did not receive the news of your marriage with indifference. I wish you and your bride all the happiness that belongs to the state; and the still greater felicity of that state which marriage is only a type of. All those connexions shall be dissolved; but there is an indissoluble bond between Christ and his church, the subject of derision to an unthinking world, but the glory and happiness of all his people.

I join with your mother and sisters in their joy upon the present occasion, and beg my affectionate respects to them, and to Mrs. Hill unknown.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 27, 1772.

I only write to return you thanks for your kind offer—*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ*. But I will endeavour to go on without troubling you. Excuse an expression that dishonours your friendship; I should rather say, it would be a trou-

ble to myself, and I know you will be generous enough to give me credit for the assertion. I had rather want many things, any thing, indeed, that this world could afford me, than abuse the affection of a friend. I suppose you are sometimes troubled upon my account. But you need not. I have no doubt it will be seen, when my days are closed, that I served a Master who would not suffer me to want any thing that was good for me. He said to Jacob, I will surely do thee good; and this he said, not for his sake only, but for ours also, if we trust in Him. This thought relieves me from the greatest part of the distress I should else suffer in my present circumstances, and enables me to sit down peacefully upon the wreck of my fortune.

Yours ever, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 2, 1772.

My obligations to you sit easy upon me, because I am sure you confer them in the spirit of a friend. 'Tis pleasant to some minds to confer obligations, and it is not unpleasant to others to be properly sensible of them. I hope I have this pleasure—and can with a true sense of your kindness subscribe myself,

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Nov. 5, 1772.

Believe me, my dear friend, truly sensible of your invitation, though I do not accept it. My peace of mind is of so delicate a constitution, that the air of London will not agree with it. You have my prayers, the only return I can make you, for your many acts of still-continued friendship.

If you should smile, or even laugh at my conclusion, and I were near enough to see it, I should not be angry, though I should be grieved. It is not long since I should have laughed at such a recompense myself. But glory be to the name of Jesus, those days are past, and, I trust, never to return!

I am yours, and Mrs. Hill's,
with much sincerity,

W. C.

 TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 12, 1776.

One to whom fish is so welcome as it is to me, can have no great occasion to distinguish the sorts. In general, therefore, whatever fish are likely to think a jaunt into the country agreeable, will be sure to find me ready to receive them; butts, plaice, flounder, or any other.

Having suffered so much by nervous fevers myself, I know how to congratulate Ashley upon his recovery. Other distempers only batter the walls; but *they* creep silently into the citadel, and put the garrison to the sword.

You perceive I have not made a squeamish use of your

obliging offer. The remembrance of past years, and of the sentiments formerly exchanged in our evening walks, convinces me still that an unreserved acceptance of what is graciously offered, is the handsomest way of dealing with one of your character.

Believe me yours,

W. C.

As to the frequency, which you leave to my choice, too, you have no need to exceed the number of your former remittances.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April—I fancy the 20th, 1777.

Thanks for a turbot, a lobster, and Captain Brydone; a gentleman, who relates his travels so agreeably, that he deserves always to travel with an agreeable companion. I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him the only poet since Shakspeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I was prejudiced. He did not belong to our Thursday society, and was an Eton man, which lowered him prodigiously in our esteem. I once thought Swift's Letters the best that could be written; but I like Gray's better. His humour, or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet, I think, equally poignant with the Dean's.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 25, 1777.

We differ not much in our opinion of Mr. Gray. When I wrote last, I was in the middle of the book. His later Epistles, I think, are worth little, *as such*, but might be turned to excellent account by a young student of taste and judgment. As to Mr. West's Letters, I think I could easily bring your opinion of them to square with mine. They are elegant and sensible, but have nothing in them that is characteristic, or that discriminates them from the letters of any other young man of taste and learning. As to the book you mention, I am in doubt whether to read it or not. I should like the philosophical part of it, but the political, which, I suppose, is a detail of intrigues carried on by the Company and their servants, a history of rising and falling nabobs, I should have no appetite to at all. I will not, therefore, give you the trouble of sending it at present.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 13, 1777.

You need not give yourself any further trouble to procure me the South Sea Voyages. Lord Dartmouth, who was here about a month since, and was so kind as to pay me two visits, has furnished me with both Cook's and Forster's 'Tis well for the poor natives of those distant countries that our national expenses cannot be supplied by cargoes of yams and ba-

nanas. Curiosity, therefore, being once satisfied, they may possibly be permitted for the future to enjoy their riches of that kind in peace.

If, when you are most at leisure, you can find out Baker upon the Microscope, or Vincent Bourne's Latin Poems, the last edition, and send them, I shall be obliged to you. Either, or both, if they can be easily found.

I am yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 1, 1778.

Your last packet was doubly welcome, and Mrs. Hill's kindness gives me peculiar pleasure, not as coming from a stranger to me, for I do not account her so, though I never saw her, but as coming from one so nearly connected with yourself. I shall take care to acknowledge the receipt of her obliging letter, when I return the books. Assure yourself, in the mean time, that I read as if the librarian was at my elbow, continually jogging it, and growling out, Make haste. But as I read aloud, I shall not have finished before the end of the week, and will return them by the diligence next Monday.

I shall be glad if you will let me know whether I am to understand by the sorrow you express, that any part of my former supplies is actually cut off, or whether they are only more tardy in coming in, than usual. It is useful even to the rich, to know, as nearly as may be, the exact amount of their income; but how much more so to a man of my small dimensions. If the former should be the case, I shall have less reason to be surprised, than I have to wonder at the continuance of them so long.

Favours are favours indeed, when laid out upon so barren a soil, where the expense of sowing is never accompanied by the smallest hope of return. What pain there is in gratitude, I have often felt ; but the pleasure of requiting an obligation, has always been out of my reach.

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 11, 1778.

Poor Sir Thomas !* I knew that I had a place in his affections, and from his own information, many years ago, a place in his will ; but little thought that after the lapse of so many years I should still retain it. His remembrance of me, after so long a season of separation, has done me much honour, and leaves me the more reason to regret his decease.

I am reading the Abbé with great satisfaction, and think him the most intelligent writer upon so extensive a subject I ever met with ; in every respect superior to the Abbé in Scotland.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May, 7, 1778.

I have been in continual fear lest every post should bring a summons for the Abbé Raynal ; and am glad that I have finished him before my fears were realized. I have kept him

* Sir Thomas Hesketh, Baronet, of Rufford Hall, in Lancashire.

long, but not through neglect or idleness. I read the five volumes to Mrs. Unwin; and my voice will seldom serve me with more than an hour's reading at a time. I am indebted to him for much information upon subjects, which, however interesting, are so remote from those with which country folks in general are conversant, that had not his works reached me at Olney, I should have been for ever ignorant of them.

I admire him as a philosopher, as a writer, as a man of extraordinary intelligence, and no less extraordinary abilities to digest it. He is a true patriot. But then the world is his country. The frauds and tricks of the cabinet, and the counter, seem to be equally objects of his aversion. And if he had not found that religion too had undergone a mixture of artifice, in its turn, perhaps he would have been a Christian.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 18, 1778.

I truly rejoice that the chancellor has made you such a present, that he has given such an additional lustre to it by his manner of conferring it, and that all this happened before you went to Wargrave, because it made your retirement there the more agreeable. This is just according to the character of the man. He will give grudgingly, in answer to solicitation, but delights in surprising those he esteems, with his bounty. May you live to receive still further proofs that I am not mistaken in my opinion of him.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July — 79.

When I was at Margate, it was an excursion of pleasure to go to see Ramsgate. The pier, I remember, was accounted a most excellent piece of stone-work, and such I found it. By this time, I suppose, it is finished, and surely it is to no small advantage, that you have an opportunity of observing how nicely those great stones are put together, as often as you please, without either trouble or expense. * * * * *

* * * * *

There was not, at that time, much to be seen in the Isle of Thanet, besides the beauty of the country, and the fine prospects of the sea, which are no where surpassed except in the Isle of Wight, or upon some parts of the coast of Hampshire. One sight, however, I remember, engaged my curiosity, and I went to see it. A fine piece of ruins, built by the late Lord Holland, at a great expense, which, the day after I saw it, tumbled down for nothing. Perhaps, therefore, it is still a ruin; and if it is, I advise you by all means to visit it, as it must have been much improved by this fortunate incident. It is hardly possible to put stones together with that air of wild and magnificent disorder which they are sure to acquire by falling of their own accord.

I remember (the last thing I mean to remember upon this occasion) that Sam Cox, the counsel, walking by the sea-side, as if absorbed in deep contemplation, was questioned about what he was musing on. He replied, "I was wondering that such an almost infinite and unwieldy element should produce a *sprat*."——Our love attends your whole party.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 17, 1779.

We envy your sea-breezes. In the garden we feel nothing but the reflection of the heat from the walls; and in the parlour, from the opposite houses. I fancy Virgil was so situated, when he wrote those two beautiful lines:

——— Oh quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!

The worst of it is, that though the sun-beams strike as forcibly upon my harp-strings as they did upon his, they elicit no such sounds, but rather produce such groans as they are said to have drawn from those of the statue of Memmon.

As you have ventured to make the experiment, your own experience will be your best guide in the article of bathing. An inference will hardly follow, though one should pull at it with all one's might, from Smollett's case to yours. He was corpulent, muscular, and strong; whereas, if you were either stolen or strayed, such a description of you in an advertisement would hardly direct an enquirer with sufficient accuracy and exactness. But if bathing does not make your head ache, or prevent your sleeping at night, I should imagine it could not hurt you.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 2, 1779.

You begin to count the remaining days of the vacation, not with impatience, but through unwillingness to see the end of it. For the mind of man, at least of most men, is equally busy in anticipating the evil and the good. That word *anticipation* puts me in remembrance of the pamphlet of that name, which, if you purchased, I should be glad to borrow. I have seen only an extract from it in the Review, which made me laugh heartily, and wish to peruse the whole.

The newspaper informs me of the arrival of the Jamaica fleet. I hope it imports some pine-apple plants for me. I have a good frame and a good bed prepared to receive them. I send you annexed a fable, in which the pine-apple makes a figure, and shall be glad if you like the taste of it. Two pair of soles, with shrimps, which arrived last night, demand my acknowledgments. You have heard that when Arion performed upon the harp, the fish followed him. I really have no design to fiddle you out of more fish, but if you should esteem my verses worthy of such a price, though I shall never be so renowned as he was, I shall think myself equally indebted to the muse that helps me.

The Pine Apple and the Bee.

* "The Pine-apples," &c.*

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill. She has put Mr. Wright to the expense of building a new hot-house: the plants

* Vide Cowper's Poems.

produced by the seeds she gave me, having grown so large as to require an apartment by themselves.

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 14, 1779.

Your approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sun-beams from their surface.

*On the Promotion of Edward Thurlow, &c.**

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM,

March 4, 1780.

To communicate surprise is almost, perhaps quite, as agreeable as to receive it. This is my present motive for writing to you rather than to Mr. Newton. He would be pleased with hearing from me, but he would not be surprised at it; you see, therefore, I am selfish upon the present occasion, and principally consult my own gratification. Indeed, if I consulted

* Cowper's Poems.

yours, I should be silent, for I have no such budget as the Ministers, furnished and stuffed with ways and means for every emergency, and shall find it difficult, perhaps, to raise supplies even for a short epistle.

You have observed in common conversation, that the man who coughs the oftenest, (I mean if he has not a cold) does it because he has nothing to say. Even so it is in letter-writing : a long preface, such as mine, is an ugly symptom, and always forebodes great sterility in the following pages.

The vicarage-house became a melancholy object, as soon as Mr. Newton had left it ; when you left it, it became more melancholy : now it is actually occupied by another family, even I cannot look at it without being shocked. As I walked in the garden this evening, I saw the smoke issue from the study chimney, and said to myself, That used to be a sign that Mr. Newton was there ; but it is so no longer. The walls of the house know nothing of the change that has taken place ; the bolt of the chamber-door sounds just as it used to do ; and when Mr. P—— goes up stairs, for aught I know, or ever shall know, the fall of his foot could hardly, perhaps, be distinguished from that of Mr. Newton. But Mr. Newton's foot will never be heard upon that staircase again. These reflections, and such as these, occurred to me upon the occasion ; * * * * *. If I were in a condition to leave Olney too, I certainly would not stay in it. It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre ; my appearance would startle them, and theirs would be shocking to me.

Such are my thoughts about the matter. Others are more deeply affected, and by more weighty considerations, having

been many years the objects of a ministry which they had reason to account themselves happy in the possession of. * * *

We were concerned at your account of Robert, and have little doubt but he will shuffle himself out of his place. Where he will find another, is a question not to be resolved by those who recommended him to this. I wrote him a long letter, a day or two after the receipt of yours, but I am afraid it was only clapping a blister upon the crown of a wig-block.

My respects attend Mr. Newton and yourself, accompanied with much affection for you both.

Yours, dear Madam,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 16, 1780.

If I had had the horns of a snail, I should have drawn them in the moment I saw the reason of your epistolary brevity, because I felt it too. May your seven reams be multiplied into fourteen, till your letters become truly Lacedæmonian, and are reduced to a single syllable. Though I shall be a sufferer by the effect, I shall rejoice in the cause. You are naturally formed for business, and such a head as yours can never have too much of it. Though my predictions have been fulfilled in two instances, I do not plume myself much upon my sagacity ; because it required but little to foresee that Thurlow would be Chancellor, and that you would have a crowded office. As to the rest of my connèxions, there, too, I have given proof of equal foresight, with not a jot more reason for vanity. * *

* * * * *

To use the phrase of all who ever wrote upon the state of Europe, the political horizon is dark indeed. The cloud has been thickening, and the thunder advancing many years. The storm now seems to be vertical, and threatens to burst upon the land, as if, with the next clap, it would shake all to pieces.—As for me, I am no Quaker, except where military matters are in question, and there I am much of the same mind with an honest man, who, when he was forced into the service, declared he would not fight, and gave this reason—because he saw nothing worth fighting for. You will say, perhaps, Is not Liberty worth a struggle? True: but will success insure it to me? Might I not, like the Americans, emancipate myself from one master, only to serve a score, and, with laurels upon my brow, sigh for my former chains again?

Many thanks for your kind invitation. Ditto to Mrs. Hill, for the seeds—unexpected, and therefore the more welcome.

You gave me great pleasure, by what you say of my uncle.* His motto shall be

Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus astas.

I remember the time when I have been kept waking, by the fear that he would die before me; but now, I think, I shall grow old first.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,

W. C.

* Ashley Cowper, Esq.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM,

June, 1789.

When I write to Mr. Newton, he answers me by letter; when I write to you, you answer me in fish. I return you many thanks for the mackerel and lobster. They assured me in terms as intelligible as pen and ink could have spoken, that you still remember *Orchard-side*; and though they never spoke in their lives, and it was still less to be expected from them that they should speak, being dead, they gave us an assurance of your affection that corresponds exactly with that which Mr. Newton expresses towards us in all his letters.—For my own part, I never in my life began a letter more at a venture than the present. It is possible that I may finish it, but perhaps more than probable that I shall not. I have had several indifferent nights, and the wind is easterly; two circumstances so unfavourable to me in all my occupations, but especially that of writing, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could even bring myself to attempt it.

You have never yet perhaps been made acquainted with the unfortunate Tom F—'s misadventure. He and his wife returning from Hanslope fair, were coming down Weston-lane; to wit, themselves, their horse, and their great wooden panniers, at ten o'clock at night. The horse having a lively imagination, and very weak nerves, fancied he either saw or heard something, but has never been able to say what. A sudden fright will impart activity, and a momentary vigour, even to lameness itself. Accordingly, he started, and sprang from the middle of the road to the side of it, with such surprising alacrity, that he dismounted the gingerbread baker, and his gingerbread wife, in a moment. Not contented with this effort, nor thinking

himself yet out of danger, he proceeded as fast as he could to a full gallop, rushed against the gate at the bottom of the lane, and opened it for himself, without perceiving that there was any gate there. Still he galloped, and with a velocity and momentum continually increasing, till he arrived in Olney. I had been in bed about ten minutes, when I heard the most uncommon and unaccountable noise that can be imagined. It was, in fact, occasioned by the clattering of tin pattypans and a Dutch-oven against the sides of the panniers. Much gingerbread was picked up in the street, and Mr. Lucy's windows were broken all to pieces. Had this been all, it would have been a comedy, but we learned the next morning, that the poor woman's collar-bone was broken, and she has hardly been able to resume her occupation since.

What is added on the other side, if I could have persuaded myself to write sooner, would have reached you sooner; 'tis about ten days old. * * * * *

*The Doves.**

The male Dove was smoking a pipe, and the female Dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye.

Yours, dear Madam,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI,

July 8, 1780.

By this time, I suppose, you have ventured to take your fingers out of your ears, being delivered from the deafen-

* Vide Cowper's Poems, vol. i.

ing shouts of the most zealous mob that ever strained their lungs in the cause of religion. I congratulate you upon a gentle relapse into the customary sounds of a great city, which, though we rustics abhor them, as noisy and dissonant, are a musical and sweet murmur, compared with what you have lately heard. The tinkling of a kennel may be distinguished now, where the roaring of a cascade would have been sunk and lost. I never suspected, till the newspapers informed me of it, a few days since, that the barbarous uproar had reached Great Queen Street. I hope Mrs. Hill was in the country, and shall rejoice to hear that, as I am sure you did not take up the protestant cudgels upon this hair-brained occasion, so you have not been pulled in pieces as a papist.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 12, 1780.

Such nights as I frequently spend, are but a miserable prelude to the succeeding day, and indispose me above all things to the business of writing. Yet with a pen in my hand, if I am able to write at all, I find myself gradually relieved; and as I am glad of any employment that may serve to engage my attention, so especially I am pleased with an opportunity of conversing with you, though it be but upon paper. This occupation above all others assists me in that self-deception to which I am indebted for all the little comfort I enjoy; things seem to be as they were, and I almost forget that they never can be so again.

We are both obliged to you for a sight of Mr. —'s letter. The friendly and obliging manner of it will much enhance the

difficulty of answering it. I think I can see plainly that though he does not hope for your applause, he would gladly escape your censure. He seems to approach you smoothly and softly, and to take you gently by the hand, as if he bespoke your lenity, and entreated you at least to spare him. You have such skill in the management of your pen, that I doubt not you will be able to send him a balmy reproof that shall give him no reason to complain of a broken head.—How delusive is the wildest speculation when pursued with eagerness, and nourished with such arguments as the perverted ingenuity of such a mind as his can easily furnish!—Judgment falls asleep upon the bench, while Imagination, like a smug, pert counselor, stands chattering at the bar, and with a deal of fine-spun, enchanting sophistry, carries all before him.

If I had strength of mind, I have not strength of body for the task which, you say, some would impose upon me. I cannot bear much thinking. The meshes of that fine network, the brain, are composed of such mere spinners' threads in me, that when a long thought finds its way into them, it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about at such a rate as seems to threaten the whole contexture.—No—I must needs refer it again to you.

My enigma will probably find you out, and you will find out my enigma at some future time. I am not in a humour to transcribe it now. Indeed I wonder that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unseasonable at any rate, but more especially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary pros-

pect, will gladly fix its eyes on any thing that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail.

You would believe, though I did not say it at the end of every letter, that we remember you and Mrs. Newton with the same affection as ever; but I would not therefore excuse myself from writing what it gives you pleasure to read. I have often wished indeed, when writing to an ordinary correspondent, for the revival of the Roman custom—*salutis* at top, and *vale* at bottom. But as the French have taught all Europe to enter a room and to leave it with a most ceremonious bow, so they have taught us to begin and conclude our letters in the same manner. However I can say to you,

Sans ceremonie,

Adieu, *mon ami!*

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

Aug. 10, 1780.

I greet you at your castle of Buen Retiro, and wish you could enjoy the unmixed pleasures of the country there. But it seems you are obliged to dash the cup with a portion of those bitters you are always swallowing in town. Well—you are honourably and usefully employed, and ten times more beneficially to society, than if you were piping to a few sheep under a spreading beech, or listening to a tinkling rill. Besides, by the effect of long custom and habitual practice, you are not only enabled to endure your occupation, but even find it agreeable. I remember the time when it would not have suited you so well, to have devoted so large a part of your vacation to the

objects of your profession ; and you, I dare say, have not forgot what a seasonable relaxation you found, when, lying at full stretch upon the ruins of an old wall, by the sea-side, you amused yourself with Tasso's Jerusalem, and the Pastor Fido. I recollect that we both pitied Mr. De Grey, when we called at his cottage at Taplow, and found, not the master indeed, but his desk, with his white-leaved folio upon it, which bespoke him as much a man of business in his retirement as in Westminster Hall. But by these steps he ascended the Bench. Now he may read what he pleases, and ride where he will, if the gout will give him leave. And you who have no gout, and probably never will, when your hour of dismissal comes, will, for that reason, if for no other, be a happier man than he.

I am, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

P. S. Mr. — has not thought proper to favour me with his book, and having no interest in the subject, I have not thought proper to purchase it. Indeed I have no curiosity to read what I am sure must be erroneous before I read it. Truth is worth every thing that can be given for it ; but a mere display of ingenuity, calculated only to mislead, is worth nothing.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 10, 1780.

I am sorry that the bookseller shuffles off the trouble of package upon any body that belongs to you. I think I could cast him upon this point, in an action upon the case, grounded upon the terms of his own undertaking. He engages to serve country customers. Ergo, as it would be unreasonable to ex-

pect that when a country gentleman wants a book, he should order his chaise, and bid the man drive to Exeter Change ; and as it is not probable that the book would find the way to him, of itself, though it were the wisest that ever was written, I should suppose the law would compel him. For I recollect it is a maxim of good authority in the courts, that there is no right without a remedy. And if another, or third person, should not be suffered to interpose between my right and the remedy the law gives me, where the right is invaded, much less, I apprehend, shall the man himself, who of his own mere motion gives me that right, be suffered to do it.

I never made so long an argument upon a law case before. I ask your pardon for doing it now. You have but little need of such entertainment.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Dec. 21, 1780.

I thank you for your anecdote of Judge Carpenter. If it really happened, it is one of the best stories I ever heard ; and if not, it has at least the merit of being *bentrovato*. We both very sincerely laughed at it, and think the whole Livery of London must have done the same ; though I have known some persons whose faces, as if they had been cast in a mould, could never be provoked to the least alteration of a single feature ; so that you might as well relate a good story to a barber's block.

Non equidem in deo, miror magis.

Your sentiments with respect to me are exactly Mrs. Unwin's.

She, like you, is perfectly sure of my deliverance, and often tells me so. I make but one answer, and sometimes none at all. That answer gives *her* no pleasure, and would give *you* as little; therefore at this time I suppress it. It is better on every account that they who interest themselves so deeply in that event, should believe the certainty of it, than that they should not. It is a comfort to *them* at least, if it is none to me; and as I could not, if I would, so neither would I, if I could, deprive them of it.

I annex a long thought in verse for your perusal. It was produced about last midsummer, but I never could prevail with myself, till now, to transcribe it.* You have bestowed some commendations on a certain poem now in the press, and they, I suppose, have at least animated me to the task. If human nature may be compared to a piece of tapestry, (and why not?) then human nature, as it subsists in me, though it is sadly faded on the right side, retains all its colour on the wrong. I am pleased with commendation, and though not passionately desirous of indiscriminate praise, or what is generally called popularity, yet when a judicious friend claps me on the back, I own I find it an encouragement. At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine, to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget every thing that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.

* The verses alluded to, appear to have been separated from the letter.

It will not be long, perhaps, before you will receive a poem called the *Progress of Error*. That will be succeeded by another, in due time, called *Truth*. Don't be alarmed. I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin that I can manage him, and make him stop when I please.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR,

Jan. 21, 1781.

I am glad that the *Progress of Error* did not Err in its Progress, as I feared it had; and that it has reached you safe; and still more pleased that it has met with your approbation; for if it had not, I should have wished it had miscarried, and have been sorry that the bearer's memory had served him so well upon the occasion. I knew him to be that sort of genius, which, being much busied in making excursions of the imaginary kind, is not always present to its own immediate concerns, much less to those of others; and having reposed the truth in him, began to regret that I had done so, when it was too late. But I did it to save a frank, and as the affair has turned out, that end was very well answered. This is committed to the hands of a less volatile person, and therefore more to be depended on.

As to the poem called *Truth*, which is already longer than its elder brother, and is yet to be lengthened by the addition of perhaps twenty lines, perhaps more; I shrink from the thought of transcribing it at present. But as there is no need to be in any hurry about it, I hope that in some rainy season, which the next month will probably bring with it, when perhaps I may

be glad of employment, the undertaking will appear less formidable.

You need not withhold from us any intelligence relating to yourselves, upon an apprehension that Mr. R—— has been beforehand with you upon those subjects, for we could get nothing out of him. I have known such travellers, in my time, and Mrs. Newton is no stranger to one of them, who keep all their observations and discoveries to themselves; till they are extorted from them by mere dint of examination, and cross-examination. He told us indeed, that some invisible agent supplied you every Sunday with a coach, which we were pleased with hearing; and this, I think, was the sum total of his information.

We are much concerned for Mr. Barham's loss; but it is well for that gentleman, that those amiable features in his character, which most incline one to sympathise with him, are the very graces and virtues that will strengthen him to bear it with equanimity and patience. People that have neither his light nor experience, will wonder that a disaster which would perhaps have broken their hearts, is not heavy enough to make any abatement in the cheerfulness of his.

Your books came yesterday. I shall not repeat to you what I said to Mrs. Unwin, after having read two or three of the letters. I admire the preface, in which you have given an air of novelty to a worn-out topic, and have actually engaged the favour of the reader by saying those things in a delicate and uncommon way, which in general are disgusting.

I suppose you know that Mr. Scott will be in town on Tuesday. He is likely to take possession of the Vicarage at last, with the best grace possible; at least, if he and Mr. Browne can agree upon the terms.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 6, 1781.

Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others. You can no where find objects more entitled to your pity, than where your pity seeks them. A man whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into danger, will always be viewed with an eye of compassion by those who understand what human nature is made of. And while we acknowledge the severity of the law to be founded upon principles of necessity and justice, and are glad that there is such a barrier provided for the peace of society, if we consider that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is not of our own making, we shall be, as you are, tenderly affected with the view of his misery, and not the less so because he has brought it upon himself. I look upon the worst man in Chelmsford gaol with a more favourable eye than upon —, who claims a servant's wages from one who never was his master.

I give you joy of your own hair. No doubt you are a considerable gainer in your appearance by being disperiwigged. The best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair; why then should he that has hair enough of his own, have recourse to imitation? I have little doubt; but that if an arm, or a leg, could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the amputation of a curl, or a lock of hair, the natural limb would have been thought less becoming, or less convenient, by some men, than a wooden one, and been disposed of accordingly.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 15, 1781.

It is possible that Mrs. Hill may not be herself a sufferer by the late terrible catastrophe in the Islands ; but I should suppose, by her correspondence with those parts, she may be connected with some that are. In either case, I condole with her ; for it is reasonable to imagine that since the first tour that Columbus made into the Western world, it never before experienced such a convulsion ; perhaps never since the foundation of the globe. You say the state grows old, and discovers many symptoms of decline. A writer, possessed of a genius for hypothesis, like that of Burnet, might construct a plausible argument to prove that the world itself is in a state of superannuation, if there be such a word. If not, there must be such a one as superannuity. When that just equilibrium that has hitherto supported all things, seems to fail, when the elements burst the chain that has bound them, the wind sweeping away the works of man, and man himself together with his works, and the ocean seeming to overleap the command, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," these irregular and prodigious vagaries seem to bespeak a decay, and forebode, perhaps, not a very distant dissolution. This thought has so run away with my attention, that I have left myself no room for the little politics that have only Great Britain for their object. Who knows but that while a thousand, and ten thousand tongues are employed in adjusting the scale of our national concerns, in complaining of new taxes, and funds loaded with a debt of accumulating millions, the consummation of all things may discharge it in a moment, and the scene of all this bustle disappear, as if it had never been ? Charles Fox would say,

perhaps, he thought it very unlikely. I question if he could prove even that. I am sure, however, he could not prove it to be impossible.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 18, 1781.

I send you *Table-Talk*. It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know, may be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favour of religion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there a bit of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the name of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose to be more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my readers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more serious than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in my circumstances has a difficult part to act: One minute obliged to bridle his humour, if he has any, and the next, to clap a spur to the sides of it: Now ready to weep from a sense of the importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained to laugh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If this be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is, and if any man doubt it, let him try. Whether all this management and contrivance be necessary, I do not know, but am inclined to suspect that if my Muse was to go forth clad in Quaker colour, without one bit of ribband to enliven her appearance, she might

walk from one end of London to the other, as little noticed as if she were one of the sisterhood indeed.

As to the word you mention, I a little suspected that you would object to it. * * * * *

* * * * * I am no friend to the use of words taken from what an uncle of mine called the diabolical dictionary, but it happens sometimes that a coarse expression is almost necessary to do justice to the indignation excited by an abominable subject. I am obliged to you, however, for your opinion, and though poetry is apt to betray one into a warmth that one is not sensible of in writing prose, shall always desire to be set down by it.

Mr. Scott told Mr. Wilson yesterday or the day before, that he had again asked Mr. R—— whether or not he intended to continue his speaking, and that Mr. R—— would give him no determinate answer. This I had from Mr. Wilson himself. It will be well if that business ends peaceably. Nothing could be more tenderly cogent than your letter to his colleague, and he, for aught I know, may be properly influenced by it; but it seems plain that either the before-mentioned had not seen it, or that if he had, he had not felt it.—Geary Ball has lost his wife. She was buried on Thursday, having left her friends a comfortable hope of her welfare.

You had been married thirty-one years last Monday. When you married, I was eighteen years of age, and had just left Westminster school. At that time, I valued a man according to his proficiency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that. I lived to see the vanity of what I had made my pride, and in a few years found that there were other attainments which would carry a man more handsomely through life, than a mere knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind

them. In measure as my attachment to these gentry wore off, I found a more welcome reception among those whose acquaintance it was more my interest to cultivate. But all this time was spent in painting a piece of wood, that had no life in it. At last I began to think *indeed*; I found myself in possession of many baubles, but not one grain of solidity in all my treasures. Then I learned the truth, and then I lost it; and there ends my history. I would no more than you wish to live such a life over again, but for one reason. He that is carried to execution, though through the roughest road, when he arrives at the destined spot, would be glad, notwithstanding the many jolts he met with, to repeat his journey.

Yours, my dear Sir, with our joint love,

W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

DEAR MADAM,

Feb. 19, 1781.

When a man, especially a man that lives altogether in the country, undertakes to write to a lady he never saw, he is the awkwardest creature in the world. He begins his letter under the same sensations he would have, if he was to accost her in person, only with this difference,—that he may take as much time as he pleases, for consideration, and need not write a single word that he has not well weighed and pondered beforehand, much less a sentence that he does not think supereminently clever. In every other respect, whether he be engaged in an interview or in a letter, his behaviour is, for the most part, equally constrained and unnatural. He resolves, as they say, to set the best leg foremost, which often proves to be what *Hu-dibras* calls—

—————Not that of bone,
But much its better th' wooden one.

His extraordinary effort only serves, as in the case of that hero, to throw him on the other side of his horse ; and he owes his want of success, if not to absolute stupidity, to his most earnest endeavour to secure it.

Now I do assure you, Madam, that all these sprightly effusions of mine stand entirely clear of the charge of premeditation, and that I never entered upon a business of this kind with more simplicity in my life. I determined, before I began, to lay aside all attempts of the kind I have just mentioned ; and being perfectly free from the fetters that self-conceit, commonly called bashfulness, fastens upon the mind, am, as you see, surprisingly brilliant.

My principal design is to thank you in the plainest terms, which always afford the best proof of a man's sincerity, for your obliging present. The seeds will make a figure hereafter in the stove of a much greater man than myself, who am a little man, with no stove at all. Some of them, however, I shall raise for my own amusement, and keep them, as long as they can be kept, in a bark heat, which I give them all the year ; and in exchange for those I part with, I shall receive such exotics as are not too delicate for a green-house.

I will not omit to tell you, what, no doubt, you have heard already, though, perhaps, you have never made the experiment, that leaves gathered at the fall are found to hold their heat much longer than bark, and are preferable in every respect. Next year, I intend to use them myself. I mention it, because Mr. Hill told me, some time since, that he was building a stove, in which, I suppose, they will succeed much better than in a frame.

I beg to thank you again, Madam, for the very fine salmon

you was so kind as to favour me with, which has all the sweetness of a Hertfordshire trout, and resembles it so much in flavour, that, blindfold, I should not have known the difference.

I beg, Madam, you will accept all these thanks, and believe them as sincere as they really are. Mr. Hill knows me well enough to be able to vouch for me, that I am not over-much addicted to compliments and fine speeches; nor do I mean either the one or the other, when I assure you that I am, dear Madam, not merely for his sake, but your own,

Your most obedient
and affectionate servant,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 25, 1781.

He that tells a long story should take care that it be not made a long story by his manner of telling it. His expression should be natural, and his method clear; the incidents should be interrupted by very few reflections, and parentheses should be entirely discarded. I do not know that poor Mr. Teedon guides himself in the affair of story-telling by any one of these rules, or by any rule indeed that I ever heard of. He has just left us, after a long visit, the greatest part of which he spent in the narration of a certain detail of facts that might have been compressed into a much smaller compass, and my attention to which has wearied and worn out all my spirits. You know how scrupulously nice he is in the choice of his expression; an exactness that soon becomes very inconvenient both to speaker and hearer, where there is not a great variety to choose out of. But Saturday evening is come, the time I generally devote to my correspondence

with you ; and Mrs. Unwin will not allow me to let it pass without writing, though, having done it herself, both she and you might well spare me upon the present occasion.

I have not yet read your extract from Mr. Scott's letter to Mr. R——, though I have had an opportunity to do it. I thought it might be better to wait a little, in hope that there might be no need to do it at all. If hereafter it should be necessary to inform him of Mr. Scott's feelings and sentiments upon the subject, I will readily perform the office, and accompany the performance of it with such advice of my own, and such reasons, as may happen to occur. In the mean time, I am a little apprehensive that opposition may provoke opposition in return, and set a sharper edge upon inclination, already sufficiently whetted to the business.

We are not the proper persons to give counsel or direction to Mr. Scott; our acquaintance with him is of too short a standing to warrant us in the use of such a liberty. But it is our joint opinion that he will not find himself easily and comfortably settled at Olney while he retains the curacy at Weston. The people of that parish are rather inclined to grumble; and, as we are informed, express some dissatisfaction on finding that they are to have but single service on the Sabbath; and the people here are not well pleased, though they will have the same number of ordinances as before, that they are not to have them at the same time. Some, perhaps, may find the alteration a real inconvenience; and others, who may not find it so, will be glad of an occasion to pretend one. His resignation of Weston would at once annihilate all these complaints, and would, besides, place the Sunday evening service and the whole management of it entirely in his own hands, which, as it would prevent the possibility of any bickerings on the account of supernumerary speakers, we should think were a most

desirable object. We are well aware that the vicinity of Weston to Ra'nstone is Mr. Scott's reason for still continuing to hold the former; but whether, when weighed in the balance against the mischiefs he may incur by doing it, it will be found a sufficient one, may be a matter deserving consideration. It can be no very difficult thing for his former people to reach him at Olney, though one mile will be added to their journey. If they really prefer him to their new minister, we think such a difficulty as that may be easily surmounted. Whether Mr. Scott's circumstances will afford the sacrifice, we do not know; but Mrs. Unwin thinks, and, if you ask me my opinion, I think so too, that if there be no other objection to the measure, he would do well to commit himself to Providence for a supply. Mr. Browne's age, and the probability, nearly related, I suppose, to a certainty, that Mr. Scott will succeed him in the living, seems, of itself, to reduce that difficulty almost to nothing. My paper is so intolerably bad, as you may perceive by the running of the ink, that it has quite worn out my patience.

Notwithstanding my purpose to shake hands with the Muse, and take my leave of her for the present, we have already had a *tete-à-tete*, since I sent you the last production. I am as much, or rather more pleased with my new plan, than with any of the foregoing. I mean to give a short summary of the Jewish story, the miraculous interpositions in behalf of that people, their great privileges, their abuse of them, and their consequent destruction; and then, by way of comparison, such another display of the favours vouchsafed to this country, the similar ingratitude with which they have requited them, and the punishment they have therefore reason to expect, unless reformation interpose to prevent it. *Expostulation* is its present title; but I have not yet found in the writing it, that faci-

lity and readiness without which I shall despair to finish it well, or indeed to finish it at all.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with love to Mrs. N.

Your ever affectionate,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 5, 1781.

Since writing has become one of my principal amusements, and I have already produced so many verses on subjects that entitle them to a hope that they may possibly be useful, I should be sorry to suppress them entirely, or to publish them to no purpose, for want of that cheap ingredient, the name of the Author. If my name therefore will serve them in any degree, as a passport into the public notice, they are welcome to it; and Mr. Johnson will, if he pleases, announce me to the world by the style and title of

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

Of the Inner Temple.

If you are of my mind, I think *Table Talk* will be the best to begin with, as the subjects of it are perhaps more popular; and one would wish, at first setting out, to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as fast as possible, that they may be willing to hear one, on a second and a third occasion.

The passage you object to I inserted merely by way of catch, and think that it is not unlikely to answer the purpose. My design was to say as many serious things as I could, and yet to be as lively as was compatible with such a purpose. Do not imagine that I mean to stickle for it as a pretty creature of my

own that I am loth to part with—but I am apprehensive that without the sprightliness of that passage to introduce it, the following paragraph would not show to advantage.—If the world had been filled with men like yourself, I should never have written it; but thinking myself in a measure obliged to tickle, if I meant to please, I therefore affected a jocularly I did not feel.—As to the rest, wherever there is war, there is misery and outrage; notwithstanding which it is not only lawful to wish, but even a duty to pray for the success of one's country. And as to the neutralities, I really think the Russian virago an impertinent puss for meddling with us, and engaging half a score kittens of her acquaintance to scratch the poor old lion, who, if he has been insolent in his day, has probably acted no otherwise than they themselves would have acted in his circumstances, and with his power to embolden them.

I am glad that the myrtles reached you safe, but am persuaded from past experience that no management will keep them long alive in London, especially in the city. Our own English Trots, the natives of the country, are for the most part too delicate to thrive there, much more the nice Italian. To give them, however, the best chance they can have, the lady must keep them well watered, giving them a moderate quantity in summer time every other day, and in winter about twice a week; not spring-water, for that would kill them. At Michaelmas, as much of the mould as can be taken out without disturbing the roots must be evacuated, and its place supplied with fresh, the lighter the better. And once in two years the plants must be drawn out of their pots with the entire ball of earth about them, and the matted roots pared off with a sharp knife, when they must be planted again with an addition of rich light earth as before. Thus dealt with, they will grow luxuriantly in a greenhouse, where they can have plenty of sweet air, which is abso-

lutely necessary to their health. I used to purchase them at Covent-garden almost every year, when I lived in the Temple; but even in that airy situation they were sure to lose their leaf in winter, and seldom recovered it again in spring. I wish them a better fate at Hoxton.

Olney has seen this day what it never saw before, and what will serve it to talk of, I suppose, for years to come. At eleven o'clock this morning, a party of soldiers entered the town, driving before them another party, who, after obstinately defending the bridge for some time, were obliged to quit it, and run. They ran in very good order, frequently faced about and fired, but were at last obliged to surrender prisoners of war. There has been much drumming and shouting, much scampering about in the dirt, but not an inch of lace made in the town, at least at the Silver End of it.

It is our joint request that you will not again leave us unwritten to for a fortnight. We are so like yourselves in this particular, that we cannot help ascribing so long a silence to the worst cause. The longer your letters the better, but a short one is better than none.

Mrs. Unwin is pretty well, and adds the greetings of her love to mine.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 18, 1781.

A slight disorder in my eye may possibly prevent my writing you a long letter, and would perhaps have prevented my

writing at all, if I had not known that you account a fortnight's silence a week too long.

I am sorry that I gave you the trouble to write twice upon so trivial a subject as the passage in question. I did not understand by your first objections to it, that you thought it so exceptionable as you do ; but being better informed, I immediately resolved to expunge it, and subjoin a few lines which you will oblige me by substituting in its place. I am not very fond of weaving a political thread into any of my pieces, and that for two reasons : first, because I do not think myself qualified, in point of intelligence, to form a decided opinion on any such topics ; and secondly, because I think them, though perhaps as popular as any, the most useless of all. The following verses are designed to succeed immediately after

——— fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drenched in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward *his* mem'ry, dear to every Muse, &c.*

I am obliged to you for your advice with respect to the manner of publication, and feel myself inclined to be determined by it. So far as I have proceeded on the subject of *Expostulation*, I have written with tolerable ease to myself, and in my own opinion (for an opinion I am obliged to have about what I write, whether I will or no,) with more emphasis and energy than in either of the others. But it seems to open upon me with an abundance of matter, that forebodes a considerable length ; and the time of year is come when, what with walking and gardening, I can find but little leisure for the pen. I mean, however, as soon as I have engrafted a new scion into the *Progress of Error*, instead of * * * *, and when I have transcribed *Truth*,

* Vide Poems, vol. i. p. 1 ; where, in the next line, the epithet *unshaken* is substituted for *the noblest*, in the letter.

and sent it to you, to apply myself to the composition last undertaken, with as much industry as I can. If therefore the three first are put into press while I am spinning and weaving the last, the whole may perhaps be ready for publication before the proper season will be past. I mean at present that a few select smaller pieces, about seven or eight perhaps, the best I can find in a bookful that I have by me, shall accompany them. All together, they will furnish, I should imagine, a volume of tolerable bulk, that need not be indebted to an unreasonable breadth of margin for the importance of its figure.

If a Board of Enquiry were to be established, at which poets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives that induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to attend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could truly say, what perhaps few poets could, that though I have no objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should follow, they are not my aim; much less is it my ambition to exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer, with a bow—Amusement. There is nothing but this—no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, Poetry excepted—that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts, which, when I am not thus employed, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success, to make an amusement of it.

In my account of the battle fought at Olney, I laid a snare for your curiosity, and succeeded. I supposed it would have an enigmatical appearance, and so it had; but like most other riddles, when it comes to be solved, you will find that it was not worth the trouble of conjecture.—There are soldiers quartered at Newport and Olney. These met, by order of their respective officers, in Emberto Marsh, performed all the ma-

nœuvres of a deedy battle, and the result was that this town was taken. Since I wrote, they have again encountered with the same intention ; and Mr. R—— kept a room for me and Mrs. Unwin, that we might sit and view them at our ease. We did so, but it did not answer our expectation ; for before the contest could be decided, the powder on both sides being expended, the combatants were obliged to leave it an undecided contest. If it were possible that when two great armies spend the night in expectation of a battle, a third could silently steal away their ammunition and arms of every kind, what a comedy would it make of that which always has such a tragical conclusion !

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 8, 1781.

Since I commenced author, my letters are even less worth your acceptance than they were before. I shall soon, however, lay down the character, and cease to trouble you with directions to a printer, at least till the summer is over. If I live to see the return of winter, I may perhaps assume it again ; but my appetite for fame is not keen enough to combat with my love of fine weather, my love of indolence, and my love of gardening employments.

I send you by Mr. Old my Works complete, bound in brown paper, and numbered according to the series in which I would have them published. With respect to the poem called *Truth*, it is so true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate

in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody as well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or, if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it would be still more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for a preface to the whole. I wish you, however, to consult your own judgment upon the occasion, and to engage in either of these works, or neither, just as your discretion guides you.

I have written a great deal to-day, which must be my excuse for an abrupt conclusion. Our love attends you both. We are in pretty good health; Mrs. Unwin indeed better than usual: and as to me, I ail nothing but the incurable ailment.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Thanks for the cocoa-nut.

I send a cucumber, not of my own raising, and yet raised by me.

Solve this enigma, dark enough
To puzzle any brains
That are not downright puzzle-proof,
And eat it for your pains.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Monday, April 23, 1781.

Having not the least doubt of your ability to execute just such a preface as I should wish to see prefixed to my publication, and being convinced that you have no good foundation

for those which you yourself entertain upon the subject, I neither withdraw my requisition, nor abate one jot of the earnestness with which I made it. I admit the delicacy of the occasion, but am far from apprehending that you will therefore find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in the appearance of my Poems, and much pleased by the alacrity with which you do it. Your favourable opinion of them affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I make allowances for your partiality to me and mine, because mine, yet I am sure you would not suffer me unadmonished to add myself to the multitude of insipid rhimers, with whose productions the world is already too much pestered.

It is worth while to send *you* a riddle, you make such a variety of guesses, and turn and tumble it about with such an industrious curiosity. The solution of that in question is—let me see; it requires some consideration to explain it, even though I made it. I raised the seed that produced the plant that produced the fruit, that produced the seed that produced the fruit I sent you. This latter seed I gave to the gardener of Ter-ningham, who brought me the cucumber you mention. Thus you see I raised it—that is to say, I raised it virtually by having raised its progenitor; and yet I did not raise it, because the identical seed from which it grew was raised at a distance. You observe I did not speak rashly, when I spoke of it as dark enough to pose an Œdipus; and have no need to call your own sagacity in question for falling short of the discovery.

A report has prevailed at Olney that you are coming in a fortnight; but taking it for granted that you know best when you shall come, and that you will make us happy in the same

knowledge as soon as you are possessed of it yourself, I did not venture to build any sanguine expectations upon it.

I have at last read the second volume of Mr. ——'s work, and had some hope that I should prevail with myself to read the first likewise. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second ; but I had not so good an appetite as a soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed when I lived in London, would for a small matter eat up a cat alive, beginning at her tail and finishing with her whiskers.

Yours *ut semper*,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 28, 1781.

I am much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my *Table Talk*, and wish that my *viva voce* Table Talk could repay you for the trouble you have had with the written one.

The season is wonderfully improved within this day or two ; and if these cloudless skies are continued to us, or rather if the cold winds do not set in again, promises you a pleasant excursion, as far, at least, as the weather can conduce to make it such. You seldom complain of too much sunshine, and if you are prepared for an heat somewhat like that of Africa, the south walk in our long garden will exactly suit you. Reflected from the gravel, and from the walls, and beating upon your head at the same time, it may possibly make you wish you could enjoy for an hour or two that immensity of shade afforded by the gigantic trees still growing in the land of your captivity. If you could

spend a day now and then in those forests, and return with a wish to England; it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non homini datæ*. The time will come perhaps (but death must come first) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.

Miss Catlett must not think of any other lodging than we can without any inconvenience, as we shall with all possible pleasure, furnish her with. We can each of us say—that is, I can say it in Latin, and Mrs. Unwin in English—*Nihil tui à me alienum puto*.

Having two more letters to write, I find myself obliged to shorten this; so once more wishing you a good journey, and ourselves the happiness of receiving you in good health and spirits.

I remain

Affectionately yours,

W. C.



TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 7, 1781.

Mr. Old brought us the acceptable news of your safe arrival. My sensations at your departure were far from pleasant,

and Mrs. Unwin suffered more upon the occasion than when you first took leave of Olney. When we shall meet again, and in what circumstances, or whether we shall meet or not, is an article to be found no where but in that volume of Providence which belongs to the current year, and will not be understood till it is accomplished. This I know, that your visit was most agreeable here. It was so even to me, who, though I live in the midst of many agreeables, am but little sensible of their charms. But when you came, I determined, as much as possible, to be deaf to the suggestions of despair; but if I could contribute but little to the pleasure of the opportunity, I might not dash it with unseasonable melancholy, and, like an instrument with a broken string, interrupt the harmony of the concert.

Lady Austen, waving all forms, has paid us the first visit; and not content with showing us that proof of her respect, made handsome apologies for her intrusion. We returned the visit yesterday. She is a lively, agreeable woman; has seen much of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. She laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation without seeming to labour at it.

I had rather submit to chastisement now, than be obliged to undergo it hereafter. If Johnson, therefore, will mark with a marginal Q, those lines that he or his object to as not sufficiently finished, I will willingly retouch them, or give a reason for my refusal. I shall moreover think myself obliged by any hints of that sort, as I do already to somebody, who, by running here and there two or three paragraphs into one, has very much improved the arrangement of my matter. I am apt, I know, to fritter it into two many pieces, and, by doing so, to disturb that order to which all writings must owe their perspicuity, at least in a considerable measure. With all that carelessness of revision

I have exercised upon the sheets as they have been transmitted to me, I have been guilty of an oversight, and have suffered a great fault to escape me, which I shall be glad to correct, if not too late.

In the *Progress of Error*, a part of the Young Squire's apparatus, before he yet enters upon his travels, is said to be

— Memorandum-book to minute down

The several posts, and where the chaise broke down.

Here, the reviewers would say, is not only "down," but "down derry down" into the bargain, the word being made to rhyme to itself. This never occurred to me till last night, just as I was stepping into bed. I should be glad, however, to alter it thus—

With memorandum-book for every town,

And ev'ry inn, and where the chaise broke down.

I have advanced so far in *Charity*, that I have ventured to give Johnson notice of it, and his option whether he will print it now or hereafter. I rather wish he may choose the present time, because it will be a proper sequel to *Hope*, and because I am willing to think it will embellish the collection.

Whoever means to take my phiz will find himself sorely perplexed in seeking for a fit occasion. That I shall not give him one, is certain; and if he steals one, he must be as cunning and quick-sighted a thief as Autolycus himself. His best course will be to draw a face, and call it mine, at a venture. They who have not seen me these twenty years will say, It may possibly be a striking likeness, now, though it bears no resemblance to what he was: time makes great alterations. They who know me better will say perhaps, Though it is not perfectly the thing, yet there is somewhat of the cast of his countenance. If the nose was a little longer, and the chin a little

shorter, the eyes a little smaller, and the forehead a little more protuberant, it would be just the man. And thus, without seeing me at all, the artist may represent me to the public eye, with as much exactness as yours has bestowed upon you, though, I suppose, the original was full in his view when he made the attempt.

We are both as well as when you left us. Our hearty affections wait upon yourself and Mrs. Newton, not forgetting Euphrosyne, the laughing lady.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 22, 1781.

I am sensible of your difficulties in finding opportunities to write; and therefore, though always desirous and sometimes impatient to hear from you, am never peevish when I am disappointed.

Johnson having begun to print, has given me some sort of security for his perseverance; else, the tardiness of his operations would almost tempt me to despair of the end. He has, indeed, time enough before him; but that very circumstance is sometimes a snare, and gives occasions to delays that cannot be remedied. Witness the hare in the fable, who fell asleep in the midst of the race, and waked not till the tortoise had won the prize.

Taking it for granted that the new marriage-bill would pass, I took occasion, in the Address to Liberty, to celebrate the joyful æra; but in doing so afforded another proof that poets are not always prophets, for the House of Lords have thrown it

out. I am, however, provided with four lines to fill up the gap, which I suppose it will be time enough to insert when the copy is sent down. I am in the middle of an affair called *Conversation*, which, as *Table Talk* serves in the present volume by way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I design shall perform the same office in a second.

Sic brevi fortes jaculamur ævo.

You cannot always find time to write, and I cannot always write a great deal; not for want of time, but for want of something equally requisite; perhaps materials, perhaps spirits, or perhaps more frequently for want of ability to overcome an indolence that I have sometimes heard even you complain of.

Yours, my dear sir, and Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM,

August, 1781.

Though much obliged to you for the favour of your last, and ready enough to acknowledge the debt, the present, however, is not a day in which I should have chosen to pay it. A dejection of mind, which perhaps may be removed by to-morrow, rather disqualifies me for writing,—a business I would always perform in good spirits, because melancholy is catching, especially where there is much sympathy to assist the contagion. But certain poultry, which I understand are about to pay their respects to you, have advertised for an agreeable companion, and I find myself obliged to embrace the opportunity of going to town with them in that capacity. * * * * *

While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it by the nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most obse-

quious followers? It can ring the changes upon the same things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be white or black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watches or one, is of little consequence. There is indeed an appearance of variety; but the folly and vanity that dictates and adopts the change, are invariably the same. When the fashions of a particular period appear more reasonable than those of the preceding, it is not because the world is grown more reasonable than it was; but because in a course of perpetual changes, some of them must sometimes happen to be for the better. Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that prevail at present, a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, perhaps next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrella, and give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree cudgel instead of it: and when he has done so, will he be wiser than now? By no means. The love of change will have betrayed him into a propriety, which, in reality, he has no taste for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that, being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another.

In a note I received from Johnson last week, he expresses a wish that my pen may be still employed. Supposing it possible that he would yet be glad to swell the volume, I have given him an order to draw upon me for eight hundred lines, if he chooses it; *Conversation*, a piece which I think I mentioned in my last to Mr. Newton, being finished. If Johnson sends for it, I shall transcribe it as soon as I can, and transmit it to Charles-square. Mr. Newton will take the trouble to forward it to the press. It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to *Table Talk*, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Pro-

vidence when he endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the joecular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.

We felt ourselves not the less obliged to you for the cocoanuts, though they were good for nothing. They contained nothing but a putrid liquor with a round white lump, which in taste and substance much resembled tallow, and was the size of a walnut. Nor am I the less indebted to your kindness for the fish, though none is yet come.

Yours, dear Madam,

Most affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 16, 1781.

I might date my letter from the green-house, which we have converted into a summer parlour. The walls hung with garden mats, and the floor covered with a carpet, the sun too in a great measure excluded, by an awning of mats which forbids him to shine any where except upon the carpet, it affords us by far the pleasantest retreat in Olney. We eat, drink, and sleep, where we always did; but here we spend all the rest of our time, and find that the sound of the wind in the trees, and the siaging of birds, are much more agreeable to our ears than the incessant barking of dogs and screaming of children. It is an observation that naturally occurs upon the occasion, and which many other occasions furnish an opportunity to make, that people long for what they have not, and overlook the good in their possession. This is so true in the present instance, that for years past I should have thought myself happy to enjoy a

retirement even less flattering to my natural taste than this in which I am now writing; and have often looked wistfully at a snug cottage, which, on account of its situation at a distance from noise and disagreeable objects, seemed to promise me all I could wish or expect, so far as happiness may be said to be local; never once adverting to this comfortable nook, which affords me all that could be found in the most sequestered hermitage, with the advantage of having all those accommodations near at hand which no hermitage could possibly afford me. People imagine they should be happy in circumstances which they would find insupportably burthensome in less than a week. A man that has been clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; envies the peasant under a thatched hovel; who, in return, envies him as much his palace and his pleasure-ground. Could they change situations, the fine gentleman would find his ceilings were too low, and that his casements admitted too much wind; that he had no cellar for his wine, and no wine to put in his cellar. These, with a thousand other mortifying deficiencies, would shatter his romantic project into innumerable fragments in a moment. The clown, at the same time, would find the accession of so much unwieldy treasure an incumbrance quite incompatible with an hour's ease. His choice would be puzzled by variety. He would drink to excess, because he would foresee no end of his abundance; and he would eat himself sick for the same reason. He would have no idea of any other happiness than sensual gratification; would make himself a beast, and die of his good fortune. The rich gentleman had, perhaps, or might have had, if he pleased, at the shortest notice, just such a recess as this; but if he had it, he overlooked it, or, if he had it not, forgot that he might command it whenever he would. The rustic too, was actually

in possession of some blessings, which he was a fool to relinquish, but which he could neither see nor feel, because he had the daily and constant use of them; such as good health, bodily strength, a head and a heart that never ached, and temperance, to the practice of which he was bound by necessity, that, humanly speaking, was a pledge and a security for the continuance of them all.

Thus I have sent you a school-boy's theme. When I write to you, I do not write without thinking, but always without premeditation: the consequence is, that such thoughts as pass through my head when I am not writing, make the subject of my letters to you.

Johnson sent me lately a sort of apology for his printer's negligence, with his promise of greater diligence for the future. There was need enough of both. I have received but one sheet since you left us. Still, indeed, I see that there is time enough before us; but I see likewise that no length of time can be sufficient for the accomplishment of a work that does not go forward. I know not yet whether he will add *Conversation* to those poems already in his hands, nor do I care much. No man ever wrote such quantities of verse, as I have written this last year, with so much indifference about the event, or rather, with so little ambition of public praise. My pieces are such as may possibly be made useful. The more they are approved, the more likely they are to spread, and consequently the more likely to attain the end of usefulness; which, as I said once before, except my present amusement, is the only end I propose. And even in the pursuit of this purpose, commendable as it is in itself, I have not the spur I should once have had;—my labour must go unrewarded, and as Mr. R—— once said, I am raising a scaffold before a house that others are to live in, and not I.

I have left myself no room for politics, which I thought, when I began, would have been my principal theme.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 21, 1781.

You wish you could employ your time to better purpose, yet are never idle. In all that you say or do; whether you are alone, or pay visits, or receive them; whether you think or write, or walk or sit still; the state of your mind is such as discovers even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at bottom whose determined tendency is towards the best things. I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, when you complain of that crowd of trifling thoughts that pesters you without ceasing; but then you always have a serious thought standing at the door of your imagination, like a justice of peace with the riot-act in his hand, ready to read it, and disperse the mob. Here lies the difference between you and me. My thoughts are clad in a sober livery, for the most part as grave as that of a bishop's servants. They turn too upon spiritual subjects, but the tallest fellow and the loudest amongst them all, is he who is continually crying out with a loud voice, *Actum est de te, periisti*. You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but however earnestly invited, it is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity with which time escapes me. Every thing around us, and every thing that befalls us, constitutes a variety,

which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity, and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled address, that even while we say they are here, they are gone. From infancy to manhood is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose, because at that time we act under the control of others, and are not suffered to have a will of our own. But thence downward into the vale of years, is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom.

Here is a new scene opening, which, whether it perform what it promises or not, will add fresh plumes to the wings of time; at least while it continues to be a subject of contemplation. If the project take effect, a thousand varieties will attend the change it will make in our situation at Olney. If not, it will serve, however, to speculate and converse upon, and steal away many hours, by engaging our attention, before it be entirely dropped. Lady Austen, very desirous of retirement, especially of a retirement near her sister, an admirer of Mr. Scott as a preacher, and of your too humble servants now in the green-house, as the most agreeable creatures in the world, is at present determined to settle here. That part of our great building which is at present occupied by Dick Coleman, his wife, child, and a thousand rats, is the corner of the world she chooses, above all others, as the place of her future residence. Next spring twelvemonth she begins to repair and beautify, and the following winter (by which time the lease of her house in town will determine) she intends to take possession. I am highly pleased with the plan, upon Mrs. Unwin's account, who, since Mrs. Newton's departure, is destitute of all female connexion, and has not, in any emergency, a woman to speak to. Mrs. Scott is indeed in the neighbourhood, and an excellent person, but always engaged by a close attention to her family, and no more than ourselves a

lover of visiting. But these things are all at present in the clouds. Two years must intervene, and in two years not only this project, but all the projects in Europe may be disconcerted.

Cocoa-nut naught,
Fish too dear,
None must be bought
For us that are here,

No lobster on earth,
That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait
Till fish can be got
At a reas'nable rate,
Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
And as oft as you please.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 25, 1781.

By Johnson's last note (for I have received a packet from him since I wrote last to you) I am ready to suspect that you have seen him, and endeavoured to quicken his proceedings. His assurance of greater expedition leads me to think

so. I know little of booksellers and printers, but have heard from others that they are the most dilatory of all people; otherwise, I am not in a hurry, nor would be so troublesome: but am obliged to you nevertheless for your interference, if his promised alacrity be owing to any spur that you have given him. He chooses to add *Conversation* to the rest, and says he will give me notice when he is ready for it; but I shall send it to *you* by the first opportune conveyance, and beg you to deliver it over to him. He wishes me not to be afraid of making the volume too large; by which expression I suppose he means, that if I had still another piece, there would be room for it. At present I have not, but am in the way to produce another, *faveat modo Musa*. I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called *Retirement*. My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves, by a life of pleasure, for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin; but if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me.

I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noted three such, all of which I have reduced into better order. In the foregoing

sheet, I assented to his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 3, 1781.

I am not willing to let the post set off without me, though I have nothing material to put into his bag. I am writing in the green-house, where my myrtles, ranged before the windows, make the most agreeable blind imaginable; where I am undisturbed by noise, and where I see none but pleasing objects. The situation is as favourable to my purpose as I could wish; but the state of my mind is not so, and the deficiencies I feel there are not to be remedied by the stillness of my retirement, or the beauty of the scene before me. I believe it is in part owing to the excessive heat of the weather, that I find myself so much at a loss when I attempt either verse or prose: my animal spirits are depressed, and dulness is the consequence. That dulness, however, is all at your service; and the portion of it that is necessary to fill up the present epistle, I send you without the least reluctance.

I am sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Occidus is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Austen has been at his sabbatical concerts, which, it seems, are com-

posed of song-tunes and psalm-tunes indiscriminately; music without words—and I suppose one may say, consequently, without devotion. On a certain occasion, when her niece was sitting at her side, she asked his opinion concerning the lawfulness of such amusements as are to be found at Vauxhall or Ranelagh; meaning only to draw from him a sentence of disapprobation, that Miss Green might be the better reconciled to the restraint under which she was held, when she found it warranted by the judgment of so famous a divine. But she was disappointed: he accounted them innocent, and recommended them as useful. Curiosity, he said, was natural to young persons; and it was wrong to deny them a gratification which they might be indulged in with the greatest safety; because the denial being unreasonable, the desire of it would still subsist. It was but a walk, and a walk was as harmless in one place as another; with other arguments of a similar import, which might have proceeded with more grace, at least with less offence, from the lips of a sensual layman. He seems, together with others of our acquaintance, to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music. The lawfulness of it, when used with moderation, and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding, than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens, and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same.

Mr. M——, though a simple, honest, good man—such, at least, he appears to us—is not likely to give general satisfaction. He preaches the truth, it seems, but not the whole truth; and a certain member of that church, who signed the letter of invitation, which was conceived in terms sufficiently encouraging, is likely to prove one of his most strenuous opposers. The little man, however, has an independent fortune, and has nothing to do but to trundle himself away to some other place, where he may find hearers, neither so nice nor so wise as we are at Olney.

Yours, my dear Sir,
With our united love,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

Sept. 16, 1781.

A noble theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oysters.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;
For when the messenger whom we dispatch'd
Enquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd;
Denying that his wagon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which, your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanced to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.

Now Madam says, (and what she says must still
 Deserve attention, say she what she will.)
 That what we call the Diligence, be-case
 It goes to London with a swifter pace,
 Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
 Returning downward with a pace as swift;
 And therefore recommends it with this aim—
 To save at least three days,—the price the same;
 For though it will not carry or convey
 For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you may,
 For oysters bred upon the salt sea shore,
 Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.

News have I none that I can deign to write;
 Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night;
 And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
 Caught in the first beginning of the show'r;
 But walking, running, and with much ado,
 Got home—just time enough to be wet through.
 Yet both are well, and, wond'rous to be told,
 Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
 And wishing just the same good hap to you,
 We say, good Madam, and good Sir, Adieu!

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Greenhouse, Sept. 18, 1781.

I return your preface, with many thanks for so affectionate an introduction to the public. I have observed nothing that in my judgment required alteration, except a single sentence in the first paragraph, which I have not obliterated, that you may restore it, if you please, by obliterating my interlineation. My reason for proposing an amendment of it was,

that your meaning did not immediately strike me, which therefore I have endeavoured to make more obvious. The rest is what I would wish it to be. You say, indeed, more in my commendation, than I can modestly say of myself; but something will be allowed to the partiality of friendship, on so interesting an occasion.

I have no objection in the world to your conveying a copy to Dr. Johnson; though I well know that one of his pointed sarcasms, if he should happen to be displeased, would soon find its way into all companies, and spoil the sale. He writes, indeed, like a man that thinks a great deal, and that sometimes thinks religiously: but report informs me that he has been severe enough in his animadversions upon Dr. Watts, who was nevertheless, if I am in any degree a judge of verse, a man of true poetical ability; careless, indeed, for the most part, and inattentive too often to those niceties which constitute elegance of expression, but frequently sublime in his conceptions, and masterly in his execution. Pope, I have heard, had placed him once in the Dunciad; but, on being advised to read before he judged him, was convinced that he deserved other treatment, and thrust somebody's blockhead into the gap, whose name, consisting of a monosyllable, happened to fit it. Whatever faults, however, I may be chargeable with as a poet, I cannot accuse myself of negligence. I never suffer a line to pass till I have made it as good as I can; and though my doctrines may offend this king of critics, he will not, I flatter myself, be disgusted by slovenly inaccuracy, either in the numbers, rhymes, or language. Let the rest take its chance. It is possible he may be pleased; and if he should, I shall have engaged on my side one of the best trumpeters in the kingdom. Let him only speak as favourably of me as he has spoken of Sir Richard Blackmore (who, though he shines in his poem called

Creation, has written more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country,) and my success will be secured.

I have often promised myself a laugh with you about your pipe, but have always forgotten it when I have been writing, and at present I am not much in a laughing humour. You will observe, however, for your comfort and the honour of that same pipe, that it hardly falls within the line of my censure. You never fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company; nor do you use it as an incentive to hard-drinking. Your friends, indeed, have reason to complain that it frequently deprives them of the pleasure of your own conversation while it leads you either into your study or your garden; but in all other respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away, therefore; and remember that if one poet has condemned the practice, a better than he (the witty and elegant Hawkins Browne) has been warm in the praise of it.

Retirement grows, but more slowly than any of its predecessors. Time was when I could with ease produce fifty, sixty, or seventy lines in a morning: now, I generally fall short of thirty, and am sometimes forced to be content with a dozen. It consists at present, I suppose, of between six and seven hundred; so that there are hopes of an end, and I dare say Johnson will give me time enough to finish it.

I nothing add but this—that *still I am*
Your most affectionate and humble

WILLIAM.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 26, 1781.

I may, I suppose, congratulate you on your safe arrival at Brighthelmstone; and am the better pleased with your design to close the summer there, because I am acquainted with the place, and, by the assistance of fancy, can, without much difficulty, join myself to the party, and partake with you in your amusements and excursions. It happened singularly enough, that just before I received your last, in which you apprise me of your intended journey, I had been writing upon the subject, having found occasion towards the close of my last poem, called *Retirement*, to take some notice of the modern passion for sea-side entertainments, and to direct to the means by which they might be made useful as well as agreeable. I think with you, that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because, at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves would preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakspeare's characters says,—“I am never merry when I hear sweet music.” The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasant, nor without its use. So much for Signor Nettuno.

Lady Austen goes to London this day se'nnight. We have told her that you shall visit her; which is an enterprise you may engage in with the more alacrity, because as she loves every thing that has any connexion with your mother, she is sure to feel a sufficient partiality for her son. Add to this, that your own personal recommendations are by no means small, or such as a woman of her fine taste and discernment can possibly overlook. She has many features in her character which you will admire; but one, in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life, and, if report say true, is scarce indeed in the superior. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the smallest service. With these fine feelings, she has the most, and the most harmless vivacity you can imagine. In short, she is—what you will find her to be, upon half an hour's conversation with her; and when I hear you have a journey to town in contemplation, I will send you her address.

Your mother is well, and joins with me in wishing that you may spend your time agreeably upon the coast of Sussex.

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 3, 1781.

Your draft is worded for twenty pounds, and figured for twenty-one. I thought it more likely the mistake should be made in the figures than in the words, and have sent you a re-

ceipt accordingly. I am obliged to you for it, and no less bound to acknowledge your kindness in thinking for a man so little accustomed to think for himself. The result of my deliberations on the subject proposed is, that it will be better, on many accounts, to sell the chambers, and to deposit the money in the funds. Public credit wants a lift, and I would willingly show my readiness to afford it one at so critical a juncture. If you can sell M—— at the same time, so as to turn him to any account, you have my free leave to do it. It has been a dry summer, and frogs may possibly be scarce, and fetch a good price; though how his frogship has attained to the honour of that appellation, at this distance from the scene of his activity, I am not able to conjecture.

I hope you have had a pleasant vacation, and have laid in a fresh stock of health and spirits for the business of the approaching winter. As for me, I have just finished my last piece, called *Retirement*; which, as soon as it is fit to appear in public, shall, together with all the rest of its fraternity, lay itself at your feet.

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill and yourself.

Yours truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 4, 1781.

I generally write the day before the post, but yesterday had no opportunity, being obliged to employ myself in settling my green-house for the winter. I am now writing before breakfast, that I may avail myself of every inch of time for the purpose. N. B., An expression a critic would quarrel with,

and call it by some hard name, signifying a jumble of ideas, and an unnatural match between time and space.

I am glad to be undeceived respecting the opinion I had been erroneously led into on the subject of Johnson's criticism on Watts. Nothing can be more judicious, or more characteristic of a distinguishing taste, than his observations upon that writer; though I think him a little mistaken in his notion, that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry, upon spiritual themes, in the aforesaid little Doctor. I perfectly acquiesce in the propriety of sending Johnson a copy of my productions; and I think it would be well to send it in our joint names, accompanied with a handsome card, such an one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favourable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper; for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration.

I forgot to tell you in my last, that I was well pleased with your proposed appearance in the title-page under the name of the editor. I do not care under how many names you appear in a book that calls me its author. In my last piece, which I finished the day before yesterday, I have told the public that I live upon the banks of the Ouse: that public is a great simpleton if it does not know that you live in London; it will consequently know that I had need of the assistance of some friend in town, and that I could have recourse to nobody with more propriety than yourself. I shall transcribe and submit to your approbation as fast as possible. I have now, I think, finished my volume; indeed I am almost weary of composing, having spent a year in doing nothing else. I reckon my volume will consist of about eight thousand lines.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 14, 1781.

I would not willingly deprive you of any comfort, and therefore would wish you to comfort yourself as much as you can with a notion that you are a more bountiful correspondent than I. You will give me leave in the mean time, however, to assert to myself a share in the same species of consolation, and to enjoy the flattering recollection that I have sometimes written three letters to your one. I never knew a poet, except myself, who was punctual in any thing, or to be depended on for the due discharge of any duty, except what he thought he owed to the Muses. The moment a man takes it into his foolish head that he has what the world calls Genius, he gives himself a discharge from the servile drudgery of all friendly offices, and becomes good for nothing, except in the pursuit of his favourite employment. But I am not yet vain enough to think myself entitled to such self-conferred honours, and though I have sent much poetry to the press, or, at least, what I hope my readers will account such, am still as desirous as ever of a place in your heart, and to take all opportunities to convince you that you have still the same in mine. My attention to my poetical function has, I confess, a little interfered of late with my other employments, and occasioned my writing less frequently than I should have otherwise done. But it is over, at least for the present, and I think for some time to come. I have transcribed *Retirement*, and send it. You will be so good as to forward it to Johnson, who will forward it, I suppose, to the public, in his own time ; but not very speedily, moving as he does. The post brought me a sheet this afternoon, but we have not yet reached the end of *Hope*.

Mr. Scott, I perceive by yours to him, has mentioned one of

his troubles, but I believe not the principal one. The question, whether he shall have an assistant at the great house in Mr. R.—, is still a question, or, at least, a subject of discontent, between Mr. Scott and the people. In a *tete-à-tete* I had with this candidate for the chair, in the course of the last week, I told him my thoughts upon the subject plainly; advised him to change places, by the help of fancy, with Mr. Scott, for a moment, and to ask himself how *he* would like a self-intruded deputy; advised him likewise by no means to address Mr. Scott any more upon the matter, for that he might be sure he would never consent to it; and concluded with telling him, that if he persisted in his purpose of speaking to the people, the probable consequence would be, that, sooner or later, Mr. Scott would be forced out of the parish, and the blame of his expulsion would all light upon him. He heard, approved, and, I think the very next day, put all my good counsel to shame, at least a considerable part of it, by applying to Mr. Scott, in company with Mr. P——, for his permission to speak at the Sunday evening lecture. Mr. Scott, as I had foretold, was immovable; but offered, for the satisfaction of his hearers, to preach three times to them on the Sabbath, which he could have done, Mr. Jones having kindly offered, though without their knowledge, to officiate for him at Weston. Mr. R. answered, “That will not do, Sir; it is not what the people wish; they want variety.” Mr. Scott replied very wisely, “If they do, they must be content without it; it is not my duty to indulge that humour.” This is the last intelligence I have had upon the subject. I received it not from Mr. Scott, but from an ear-witness.

I did not suspect, till the Reviewers told me so, that you are made up of artifice and design, and that your ambition is to de-
hude your hearers. Well—I suppose they please themselves with the thought of having mortified you; but how much are

they mistaken ! They shot at you, and their arrow struck the Bible, recoiling, of course, upon themselves. My turn will come, for I think I shall hardly escape a threshing.

Yours, my dear sir,

And Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 22, 1781.

Mr. Bates, without intending it, has passed a severer censure upon the modern world of readers, than any that can be found in my volume. If they are so merrily disposed, in the midst of a thousand calamities, that they will not deign to read a preface of three or four pages, because the purport of it is serious, they are far gone indeed, and in the last stage of a frenzy, such as I suppose has prevailed in all nations that have been exemplarily punished, just before the infliction of the sentence. But though he lives in the world he has so ill an opinion of, and ought therefore to know it better than I, who have no intercourse with it at all, I am willing to hope that he may be mistaken. Curiosity is an universal passion. There are few people who think a book worth their reading, but feel a desire to know something about the writer of it. This desire will naturally lead them to peep into the preface, where they will soon find that a little perseverance will furnish them with some information on the subject. If, therefore, your preface finds no readers, I shall take it for granted that it is because the book itself is accounted not worth their notice. Be that as it may, it is quite sufficient that I have played the antic myself for their diversion ; and that, in a state of dejection such as they are abso-

lute strangers to, I have sometimes put on an air of cheerfulness and vivacity, to which I myself am in reality a stranger, for the sake of winning their attention to more useful matter. I cannot endure the thought for a moment, that you should descend to my level on the occasion, and court their favour in a style not more unsuitable to your function, than to the constant and consistent strain of your whole character and conduct. No—let the preface stand. I cannot mend it. I could easily make a jest of it, but it is better as it is.

By the way—will it not be proper, as you have taken some notice of the modish dress I wear in *Table-Talk*, to include *Conversation* in the same description, which is (the first half of it, at least,) the most airy of the two? They will otherwise think, perhaps, that the observation might as well have been spared entirely; though I should have been sorry if it had, for when I am jocular I do violence to myself, and am therefore pleased with your telling them, in a civil way, that I play the fool to amuse them, not because I am one myself, but because I have a foolish world to deal with.

I am inclined to think that Mr. Scott will no more be troubled by Mr. R——, with applications of the sort I mentioned in my last. Mr. Scott, since I wrote that account, has related to us, himself, what passed in the course of their interview; and, it seems, the discourse ended with his positive assurance, that he never would consent to the measure, though, at the same time, he declared he would never interrupt or attempt to suppress it. To which Mr. R—— replied, that unless he had his free consent, he should never engage in the office. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, in time, that part of the people, who may at present be displeased with Mr. Scott, for withholding his consent, will grow cool upon the subject, and be satisfied with receiving their instruction from their proper minister.

I beg you will, on no future occasion, leave a blank for Mrs. Newton, unless you have first engaged her promise to fill it; for thus we lose the pleasure of your company, without being indemnified for the loss, by the acquisition of hers. Our love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON,

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 7, 1781.*

Having discontinued the practice of verse-making for some weeks, I now feel quite incapable of resuming it; and can only wonder at it, as one of the most extraordinary incidents in my life, that I should have composed a volume. Had it been suggested to me as a practicable thing, in better days, though I should have been glad to have found it so, many hindrances would have conspired to withhold me from such an enterprise. I should not have dared, at that time of day, to have committed my name to the public, and my reputation to the hazard of their opinion. But it is otherwise with me now. I am more indifferent about what may touch me in that point, than ever I was in my life. The stake that would then have seemed important, now seems trivial; and it is of little consequence to me, who no longer feel myself possessed of what I accounted infinitely more valuable, whether the world's verdict shall pronounce me a poet, or an empty pretender to the title. This happy coldness towards a matter so generally interesting to all rhymers, left me quite at liberty for the undertaking, unfettered by fear, and under no restraints of that diffidence, which is my natural temper, and which would either have made it impossible for me to comment

an author by name, or would have insured my miscarriage if I had. In my last dispatches to Johnson I sent him a new edition of the title-page, having discarded the Latin paradox which stood at the head of the former, and added a French motto to that from Virgil. It is taken from a volume of the excellent Caraccioli, called *Jouissance de soi-meme*, and strikes me as peculiarly apposite to the purpose.

Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to march hither, and faithfully told us it was in consequence of those orders that he came. He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott. Mr. R—— came in. Mr. Bull began, addressing himself to the former, My friend, you are in trouble; you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance. Mr. Scott replied, he had been so, but he was better. Come then, says Mr. Bull, I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less, and converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?—Thrice—Ay, there it is. Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too.—I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton.—You do well to follow his steps, in all other instances, but in this instance you are wrong, and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man but himself could have used, so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should insure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you.

When he related to us this harangue, so nicely adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good, and as Jacques says,

"It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

Our love of you both, though often sent to London, is still with us. If it is not an inexhaustible well (there is but one love that can, with propriety, be called so,) it is, however, a very deep one, and not likely to fail while we are living.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 24, 1781.

News is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed in West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel yourself disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? No, say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old women frighten children, and teach children to frighten each other. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an apparition is an impossible thing. You can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? Yes. Then I can tell you one.

You have heard, no doubt, of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead, and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood.—When Paul died, he left his lordship a legacy. It was his heart, which was taken out of his body, and sent as directed. His friend having built a church, and, at that time just finished it, used it as a mauso-

leum upon this occasion; and having (as I think the newspapers told us at the time) erected an elegant pillar in the centre of it, on the summit of this pillar, enclosed in a golden urn, he placed the heart in question. But not as a lady places a china figure upon her mantle-tree, or on the top of her cabinet, but with much respectful ceremony, and all the forms of funeral solemnity. He hired the best singers and the best performers. He composed an anthem for the purpose, he invited all the nobility and gentry in the country to assist at the celebration of these obsequies, and having formed them all into an august procession, marched to the place appointed at their head, and consigned the posthumous treasure, with his own hands, to its state of honourable elevation. Having thus, as he thought, and as he might well think, (* * * *) appeased the manes of the deceased, he rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so,—about a week since I received a letter from a person, who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has appeared frequently of late, and that there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not seen him, sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house, by day and by night, indifferently. I make no reflection upon this incident, having other things to write about, and but little room.

I am much indebted to Mr. S—— for more franks, and still more obliged by the handsome note with which he accompanied them. He has furnished me sufficiently for the present occasion, and by his readiness, and obliging manner of doing it, encouraged me to have recourse to him, in case another exigence of the same kind should offer. A French author I was reading last night, says, He that has written, will write again. If the critics do not set their foot upon this first egg that I have laid, and crush it, I shall probably verify his observation; and

when I feel my spirits rise, and that I am armed with industry sufficient for the purpose, undertake the production of another volume. At present, however, I do not feel myself so disposed; and, indeed, he that would write, should read, not that he may retail the observations of other men, but that, being thus refreshed and replenished, he may find himself in a condition to make and to produce his own. I reckon it among my principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not read an English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical, a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of somebody indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it; and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire. But enough of this.

Your mother, who is as well as the season of the year will permit, desires me to add her love.—The salmon you sent us arrived safe, and was remarkably fresh. What a comfort it is to have a friend who knows that we love salmon, and who cannot pass by a fishmonger's shop, without finding his desire to send us some, a temptation too strong to be resisted!

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 26, 1781.

I thank you much for your letter, which, without obliging me to travel to Wargrave at a time of year when journey-

ing is not very agreeable, has introduced me, in the most commodious manner, to a perfect acquaintance with your neat little garden, your old cottage, and, above all, your most prudent and sagacious landlady. As much as I admire her, I admire much more that philosophical temper with which you seem to treat her; for I know few characters more provoking, to me at least, than the selfish, who are never honest, especially if, while they determine to pick your pocket, they have not ingenuity enough to conceal their purpose. But you are perfectly in the right, and act just as I would endeavour to do, on the same occasion. You sacrifice every thing to a retreat you admire, and if the natural indolence of my disposition did not forsake me, so would I.

You might as well apologize for sending me forty pounds, as for writing about yourself. Of the two ingredients, I hardly know which made your letter the most agreeable (observe, I do not say the most acceptable.) The draft, indeed, was welcome; but, though it was so, yet it did not make me laugh. I laughed heartily at the account you give me of yourself, and your landlady, Dame Saveall, whose picture you have drawn, though not with a flattering hand, yet, I dare say, with a strong resemblance. As to you, I have never seen so much of you since I saw you in London, where you and I have so often made ourselves merry with each other's humour, yet never gave each other a moment's pain by doing so. We are both humourists, and it is well for your wife, and my Mrs. Unwin, that they have alike found out the way to deal with us.

More thanks to Mrs. Hill for her intentions.* She has the true enthusiasm of a gardener, and I can pity her under her disappointment, having so large a share of that commodity myself.

Yours, my dear Sir, affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 27, 1781.

First Mr. Wilson, then Mr. Teedon, and lastly Mr. Whitford, each with a cloud of melancholy on his brow, and with a mouth wide open, have just announced to us this unwelcome intelligence from America. We are sorry to hear it, and should be more cast down than we are, if we did not know that this catastrophe was ordained beforehand, and that therefore neither conduct, nor courage, nor any means that can possibly be mentioned, could have prevented it. If the king and his ministry can be contented to close the business here, and, taking poor Dean Tucker's advice, resign the Americans into the hands of their new masters, it may be well for Old England. But if they will still persevere, they will find it, I doubt, an hopeless contest to the last. Domestic murmurs will grow louder, and the hands of faction, being strengthened by this late miscarriage, will find it easy to set fire to the pile of combustibles they have been so long employed in building. These are my politics, and for aught I can see, you and we by our respective fire-sides, though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of kingdoms, can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight, as the greatest man in the cabinet.

Though when I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it, and although I have frequently since that time, both read and recollected it with the same approbation, I lately became uneasy upon the subject, and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal, and to dispose of it ultimately ac-

ording to your sentence. I am glad you have condemned it, and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me, and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry, or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book were burnt, than a single line guilty of such a tendency should escape me.

We thank you for two copies of your Address to your Parishioners. The first I lent to Mr. Scott, whom I have not seen since I put it into his hands. You have managed your subject well; have applied yourself to despisers and absentees of every description, in terms so expressive of the interest you take in their welfare, that the most wrong-headed person cannot be offended. We both wish it may have the effect you intend, and that prejudices and groundless apprehensions being removed, the immediate objects of your ministry may make a more considerable part of your congregation.

Yours, my dear Sir, as ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

[Fragment.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Same date.

A visit from Mr. Whitford shortened one of your letters to me; and now the same cause has operated with the same effect upon one of mine to you. He is just gone; desired me to send his love, and talks of enclosing a letter to you in my next cover.

Literas tuas irato Sacerdoti scriptas, legi, perlegi, et ne verbum quidem mutandum, censeo. Gratias tibi acturum si sapiat, existimo; sin aliter eveniat, amici tamen officium præstitisti, et te coram te vindicâsti.

I have not written in Latin to show my scholarship, nor to excite Mrs. Newton's curiosity, nor for any other wise reason whatever; but merely because, just at that moment, it came into my head to do so.

I never wrote a copy of Mary and John* in my life, except that which I sent to you. It was one of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing, or just before I begin. I sent it to you, because to you I send any thing that I think may raise a smile; but should never have thought of multiplying the impression. Neither did I ever repeat them to any one except Mrs. Unwin. The inference is fair and easy, that you have some friend who has a good memory.

This afternoon the maid opened the parlour-door, and told us there was a lady in the kitchen. We desired she might be introduced, and prepared for the reception of Mrs. Jones. But it proved to be a lady unknown to us, and not Mrs. Jones. She walked directly up to Mrs. Unwin, and never drew back till their noses were almost in contact. It seemed as if she meant to salute her. An uncommon degree of familiarity, accompa-

Note by the Editor.

* The lines alluded to are the following, which appeared afterwards somewhat varied, in the *Elegant Extracts in Verse* :—

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
 'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
 Should John wed a score, oh! the claws and the scratches!
 It can't be a match:—tis a bundle of matches.

nied with an air of most extraordinary gravity, made me think her a little crazy. I was alarmed, and so was Mrs. Unwin. She had a bundle in her hand—a silk handkerchief tied up at the four corners. When I found she was not mad, I took her for a smuggler, and made no doubt but she had brought samples of contraband goods. But our surprise, considering the lady's appearance and deportment, was tenfold what it had been, when we found that it was Mary Philips's daughter, who had brought us a few apples by way of a specimen of a quantity she had for sale.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 2, 1781.

I thank you for the note. There is some advantage in having a tenant who is irregular in his payments : the longer the rent is withheld, the more considerable the sum when it arrives ; to which we may add, that its arrival being unexpected, a circumstance that obtains always in a degree exactly in proportion to the badness of the tenant, is always sure to be the occasion of an agreeable surprise ; a sensation that deserves to be ranked among the pleasantest that belong to us.

I gave two hundred and fifty pounds for the chambers. Mr. Ashurst's receipt, and the receipt of the person of whom he purchased, are both among my papers ; and when wanted, as I suppose they will be in case of a sale, shall be forthcoming at your order.

The conquest of America seems to go on but slowly. Our ill success in that quarter will oblige me to suppress two pieces that I was rather proud of. They were written two or three years ago ; not long after the double repulse sustained by Mr.

D'Estaing at Lucia and at Savannah, and when our operations in the western world wore a more promising aspect. Presuming, upon such promises, that I might venture to prophesy an illustrious consummation of the war, I did so. But my predictions proving false, the verse in which they were expressed must perish with them.

Since I began to write, I have searched all the papers I have, and cannot find the receipts above-mentioned. I hope, however, they are not essential to the validity of the transaction.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 4, 1781.

The present to the queen of France, and the piece addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, my only two political efforts, being of the predictive kind, and both falsified, or likely to be so, by the miscarriage of the royal cause in America, were already condemned when I received your last.* I have a poeti-

* As the reader may yet wish to see the lines to Sir Joshua, the Editor extracts them from a letter to the Rev. William Unwin, of an earlier date. Those to the Queen of France are not in his possession.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine—

cal epistle which I wrote last summer, and another poem not yet finished, in stanzas, with which I mean to supply their places. Henceforth I have done with politics. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene, that an event which appears probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labour, bestow his rhymes upon future contingencies, which perhaps are never to take place but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy. I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig,

Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the Sisterhood :—We come—
Fix well your pallet on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints—
We come to furnish you with hints.
French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of the story.

First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,
Fill'd up becomes a paper kite.
Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw *six-and-twenty rueful faces*,
Each with a staring, stedfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally.
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that rais'd it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every flutt'ring sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.

and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavours. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice ; and as that part of the present century was a season when clubs of a political character, and consequently political songs, were much in fashion, the best in that style, some written by Rowe, and I think some by Congreve, and many by other wits of the day, were proposed to my admiration. Being grown up, I became desirous of imitating such bright examples, and while I lived in the Temple produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular. What we learn in childhood we retain long ; and the successes we met with, about three years ago, when D'Estaing was twice repulsed, once in America, and once in the West Indies, having set fire to my patriotic zeal once more, it discovered itself by the same symptoms, and produced effects much like those it had produced before. But, unhappily, the ardour I felt upon the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact, pushed me upon uniting the prophetic with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose.—I am glad it did. The less there is of that sort in my book the better ; it will be more consonant to your character, who patro-

Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confed'rate war.
Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home :
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn ;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round ;
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

nise the volume, and, indeed, to the constant tenor of my own thoughts upon public matters, that I should exhort my country men to repentance, than that I should flatter their pride—that vice for which, perhaps, they are even now so severely punished

We are glad, for Mr. Barham's sake, that he has been so happily disappointed. How little does the world suspect what passes in it every day!—that true religion is working the same wonders now as in the first ages of the church,—that parents surrender up their children into the hands of God, to die at his own appointed moment, and by what death he pleases, without a murmur, and receive them again as if by a resurrection from the dead! The world, however, would be more justly chargeable with wilful blindness than it is, if all professors of the truth exemplified its power in their conduct as conspicuously as Mr. Barham.

Easterly winds, and a state of confinement within our own walls, suit neither me nor Mrs. Unwin; though we are both, to use the Irish term, rather unwell than ill.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

Mrs. Madan is happy.—She will be found ripe, fall when she may.

We are sorry you speak doubtfully about a spring visit to Olney. Those doubts must not outlive the winter.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 17, 1781.

The poem I had in hand when I wrote last is on the subject of Friendship. By the following post I received a packet

from Johnson. The proof-sheet it contained brought our business down to the latter part of *Retirement*; the next will consequently introduce the first of the smaller pieces. The volume consisting, at least four-fifths of it, of heroic verse as it is called, and grave matter, I was desirous to displace the Burning Mountain* from the post it held in the van of the light infantry, and throw it into the rear. Having finished *Friendship*, and fearing that if I delayed to send it, the press would get the start of my intention, and knowing perfectly that with respect to the subject, and the subject matter of it, it contained nothing that you would think exceptionable, I took the liberty to transmit it to Johnson, and hope that the next post will return it to me printed. It consists of between thirty and forty stanzas; a length that qualifies it to supply the place of the two cancelled pieces, without the aid of the Epistle I mentioned. According to the present arrangement, therefore, *Friendship*, which is rather of a lively cast, though quite sober, will follow next after *Retirement*, and *Ætna* will close the volume. Modern naturalists, I think, tell us that the volcano forms the mountain. I shall be charged therefore, perhaps, with an unphilosophical error in supposing that *Ætna* was once unconscious of intestine fires, and as lofty as at present before the commencement of the eruptions. It is possible, however, that the rule, though just in some instances, may not be of universal application; and if it be, I do not know that a poet is obliged to write with a philosopher at his elbow, prepared always to bend down his imagination to mere matters of fact. You will oblige me by your opinion; and tell me, if you please, whether you think an apologetical note may be necessary; for I would not appear a dunce in matters

* The poem afterwards entitled "*Heroism*."

Vide Poems, vol. I.

that every Review reader must needs be apprized of. I say a note, because an alteration of the piece is impracticable; at least without cutting off its head, and setting on a new one; a task I should not readily undertake, because the lines which must, in that case, be thrown out, are some of the most poetical in the performance.

Possessing greater advantages, and being equally dissolute with the most abandoned of the neighbouring nations, we are certainly more criminal than they. They *cannot* see, and we *will* not. It is to be expected, therefore, that when judgment is walking through the earth, it will come commissioned with the heaviest tidings to the people chargeable with the most perverseness. In the latter part of the Duke of Newcastle's administration, all faces gathered blackness. The people, as they walked the streets, had, every one of them, a countenance like what we may suppose to have been the prophet Jonah's, when he cried "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But our Nineveh too repented, that is to say, she was affected in a manner somewhat suitable to her condition. She was dejected; she learned an humbler language, and seemed, if she did not trust in God, at least to have renounced her confidence in herself. A respite ensued; the expected ruin was averted; and her prosperity became greater than ever. Again she became self-conceited and proud, as at the first; and how stands it with her Nineveh now? Even as you say; her distress is infinite, her destruction appears inevitable, and her heart as hard as the nether millstone. Thus, I suppose, it was when ancient Nineveh found herself agreeably disappointed; she turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and that flagrant abuse of mercy exposed her, at the expiration of forty years, to the complete execution of a sentence she had only been threatened with before. A similarity of events, accompanied by a strong similarity of con

duct, seems to justify our expectations that the catastrophe will not be very different. But after all, the designs of Providence are inscrutable, and, as in the case of individuals, so in that of nations, the same causes do not always produce the same effects. The country indeed cannot be saved in its present state of profligacy and profaneness, but may, nevertheless, be led to repentance by means we are little aware of, and at a time when we least expect it.

Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton, and we rejoice that you feel no burthens but those you bear in common with the liveliest and most favoured Christians.—It is a happiness in poor Peggy's case that she can swallow five shillings' worth of physic in a day, but a person must be in her case to be duly sensible of it.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I dare say I do not enter exactly into your idea of a present theocracy, because mine amounts to no more than the common one, that all mankind, though a few are really aware of it, act under a providential direction, and that a gracious superintendence in particular, is the lot of those who trust in God. Thus I think respecting individuals, and with respect to the kingdoms of the earth, that perhaps by his own immediate operation, though more probably by the intervention of angels, (vide Daniel) the great Governor manages and rules them, assigns them their origin, duration, and end, appoints them prosperity or adversity, glory or disgrace, as their virtues or their vices,

their regard to the dictates of conscience and his word, or their prevailing neglect of both, may indicate and require. But in this persuasion, as I said, I do not at all deviate from the general opinion of those who believe a Providence, at least who have a scriptural belief of it. I suppose, therefore, you mean something more, and shall be glad to be more particularly informed.

I see but one feature in the face of our national concerns that pleases me;—the war with America, it seems, is to be conducted on a different plan. This is something; when a long series of measures, of a certain description, has proved unsuccessful, the adoption of others is at least pleasing, as it encourages a hope that they may possibly prove wiser, and more effectual: but, indeed, without discipline, all is lost. Pitt himself could have done nothing with such tools; but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads, for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The shortest day, 1781.

I might easily make this letter a continuation of my last, another national miscarriage having furnished me with a fresh illustration of the remarks we have both been making. Mr. S——, who has most obligingly supplied me with franks throughout my whole concern with Johnson, accompanied the last parcel he sent me with a note dated from the House of Commons, in which he seemed happy to give me the earliest intelligence of the capture of the French transports by Admi-

ral Kempenfelt, and of a close engagement between the two fleets, so much to be expected. This note was written on Monday, and reached me by Wednesday's post; but, alas! the same post brought us the newspaper that informed us of his being forced to fly before a much superior enemy, and glad to take shelter in the port he had left so lately. This event, I suppose, will have worse consequences than the mere disappointment; will furnish opposition, as all our ill success has done, with the fuel of dissention, and with the means of thwarting and perplexing administration. Thus all we purchase with the many millions expended yearly, is distress to ourselves, instead of our enemies, and domestic quarrels, instead of victories abroad. It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us reel and stagger, indeed, but the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees. That fall would save us; but if we fall upon our side at last, we are undone. So much for politics.

I enclose a few lines on a thought which struck me yesterday.* If you approve of them, you know what to do with them. I should think they might occupy the place of an introduction, and should call them by that name, if I did not judge the name I have given them necessary for the information of the reader. A flatting-mill is not met with in every street, and my book will, perhaps, fall into the hands of many who do not know that such a mill was ever invented. It happened to me, however, to spend much of my time in one, when I was a boy, when I frequently amused myself with watching the operation I describe.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

* The lines alluded to are entitled, "*The Flatting Mill, an Illustration.*" Vide Poems, vol. III.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The last day of 1781.

Yesterday's post, which brought me yours, brought me a packet from Johnson. We have reached the middle of the Mahometan Hog. By the way, your lines, which, when we had the pleasure of seeing you here, you said you would furnish him with, are not inserted in it. I did not recollect, till after I had finished the *Flatting Mill*, that it bore any affinity to the motto taken from Caraccioli. The resemblance, however, did not appear to me to give any impropriety to the verses, as the thought is much enlarged upon, and enlivened by the addition of a new comparison. But if it is not wanted, it is superfluous, and if superfluous, better omitted.—I shall not humble Johnson for finding fault with *Friendship*, though I have a better opinion of it myself; but a poet is, of all men, the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. But as there is a sufficient quantity without it, let that sleep too. If I should live to write again, I may possibly take up that subject a second time, and clothe it in a different dress. It abounds with excellent matter, and much more than I could find room for, in two or three pages.

I consider England and America as once one country. They were so, in respect of interest, intercourse, and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic ocean flows between them. He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores together, so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet each other in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence, and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently

a scourge to England ; but is it a blessing to America? Time may prove it one, but at present it does not seem to wear an aspect favourable to their privileges, either civil, or religious. I cannot doubt the truth of Dr. W.'s assertion ; but the French, who pay but little regard to treaties that clash with their convenience, without a treaty, and even in direct contradiction to verbal engagements, can easily pretend a claim to a country which they have both bled and paid for ; and if the validity of that claim be disputed, behold an army ready landed, and well-appointed, and in possession of some of the most fruitful provinces, prepared to prove it. A scourge is a scourge at one end only. A bundle of thunderbolts, such as you have seen in the talons of Jupiters's eagle, is at both ends equally tremendous, and can inflict a judgment upon the West, at the same moment that it seems to intend only the chastisement of the East.

Yours, my dear sir,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 13, 1782.

I believe I did not thank you for your anecdotes, either foreign or domestic, in my last, therefore I do it now ; and still feel myself, as I did at the time, truly obliged to you for them. More is to be learned from one matter of fact, than from a thousand speculations. But, alas ! what course can government take ? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red-hot iron with his naked hand, it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the colonies in the hands of administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them.

I know not whether your sentiments and mine upon this part of the subject exactly coincide, but you will know, when you understand what mine are. It appears to me that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and to his people, to consider himself with respect to every inch of his territories, as a trustee deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or waste them, so he may not resign them to an enemy, or transfer his right to govern them to any, not even to themselves, so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest, and that of his other dominions. It may be said, suppose Providence has ordained that they shall be wrested from him, how then? I answer, that cannot appear to be the case, till God's purpose is actually accomplished; and in the mean time the most probable prospect of such an event does not release him from his obligation to hold them to the last moment, for as much as adverse appearances are no infallible indication of God's designs, but may give place to more comfortable symptoms, when we least expect it. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on his Majesty's throne, I should be as obstinate as he, because if I quitted the contest, while I had any means left of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory answer to the doubts and inquiries of my own conscience.

Yours, my dear Sir,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 31, 1782.

Having thanked you for a barrel of very fine oysters, I should have nothing more to say, if I did not determine to say every thing that may happen to occur. The political world affords us no very agreeable subjects at present, nor am I sufficiently conversant with it, to do justice to so magnificent a theme, if it did. A man that lives as I do, whose chief occupation, at this season of the year, is to walk ten times in a day from the fire-side to his cucumber frame and back again, cannot shew his wisdom more, if he has any wisdom to shew, than by leaving the mysteries of government to the management of persons, in point of situation and information, much better qualified for the business. Suppose not, however, that I am perfectly an unconcerned spectator, or that I take no interest at all in the affairs of my country; far from it—I read the news—I see that things go wrong in every quarter. I meet, now and then, with an account of some disaster that seems to be the indisputable progeny of treachery, cowardice, or a spirit of faction; I recollect that in those happier days, when you and I could spend our evening in enumerating victories and acquisition, that seemed to follow each other in a continued series, there was some pleasure in hearing a politician; and a man might talk away upon so entertaining a subject, without danger of becoming tiresome to others, or incurring weariness himself. When poor Bob White brought me the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Confians, I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture, when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec. I am not, therefore, I suppose, destitute of true patriotism, but the course

of public events has, of late, afforded me no opportunity to exert it. I cannot rejoice, because I see no reason, and I will not murmur, because for that I can find no good one. And let me add, he that has seen both sides of fifty, has lived to little purpose, if he has not other views of the world than he had when he was much-younger. He finds, if he reflects at all, that it will be to the end, what it has been from the beginning, a shifting, uncertain, fluctuating scene; that nations, as well as individuals, have their seasons of infancy, youth, and age. If he be an Englishman, he will observe that ours, in particular, is affected with every symptom of decay, and is already sunk into a state of decrepitude. I am reading Mrs. M'Aulay's History. I am not quite such a superannuated simpleton, as to suppose that mankind were wiser or much better, when I was young, than they are now. But I may venture to assert, without exposing myself to the charge of dotage, that the men whose integrity, courage, and wisdom, broke the bands of tyranny, established our constitution upon its true basis, and gave a people, overwhelmed with the scorn of all countries, an opportunity to emerge into a state of the highest respect and estimation, make a better figure in history than any of the present day are likely to do, when their pretty harangues are forgotten, and nothing shall survive but the remembrance of the views and motives with which they made them.

My dear friend, I have written at random, in every sense, neither knowing what sentiments I should broach, when I began, nor whether they would accord with yours. Excuse a rustic, if he errs on such a subject, and believe me sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 14, 1782.

As servant-maids, and such sort of folks, account a letter good for nothing, unless it begins with—This comes hoping you are well, as I am at this present : so I should be chargeable with a great omission, were I not to make frequent use of the following grateful exordium—Many thanks for a fine cod and oysters. Your bounty never arrived more seasonably. I had just been observing that among other deplorable effects of the war, the scarcity of fish which it occasioned, was severely felt at Olney ; but your plentiful supply immediately reconciled me, though not to the war, yet to my small share in the calamities it produces.

I hope my bookseller has paid due attention to the order I gave him to furnish you with my books. The composition of those pieces afforded me an agreeable amusement at intervals, for about a twelvemonth ; and I should be glad to devote the leisure hours of another twelvemonth to the same occupation ; at least, if my lucubrations should meet with a favourable acceptance. But I cannot write when I would ; and whether I shall find readers, is a problem not yet decided. So the Muse and I are parted for the present.

I sent Lord Thurlow a volume, and the following letter with it, which I communicate because you will undoubtedly have some curiosity to see it.*

Yours,

W. C.

* For the letter to Lord Thurlow, see Cowper's Letters, vol. I. page 192.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 14, 1782.

I was not acquainted with Mr. B—'s extraordinary case, before you favoured me with his letter and his intended dedication to the Queen, though I am obliged to you for a sight of those two curiosities, which I do not recollect to have ever seen till you sent them. I could, however, were it not a subject that would make us all melancholy, point out to you some essential differences between his state of mind and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair, if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy persuasion with as many instances as you please, of persons, who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored; and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and therefore the blessed reverse, that others have experienced, affords no ground of comfortable expectation to *him*. But you will say, it is reasonable to conclude that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed at last, so will you:—I grant the reasonableness of it; it would be sinful, perhaps, because uncharitable, to reason otherwise; but an argument, hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and in this instance, so will yours. But I forbear. For the cause above mentioned, I will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail would carry. I must deal

with you as I deal with poor Mrs. Unwin, in all our disputes about it, cutting all controversy short by an appeal to the event.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 22, 1782.

If reading verse be your delight,
 'Tis mine as much, or more, to write ;
 But what we would, so weak is man,
 Lies oft remote from what we can.
 For instance, at this very time,
 I feel a wish, by cheerful rhyme
 To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
 To cheat him of an anxious hour ;
 Not meaning (for I must confess,
 It were but folly to suppress,)
 His pleasure, or his good alone,
 But squinting partly at my own.
 But though the sun is flaming high
 I' th' centre of yon arch, the sky,
 And he had once (and who but he?)
 The name for setting genius free,
 Yet whether poets of past days
 Yielded him undeserved praise,
 And he by no uncommon lot
 Was famed for virtues he had not ;
 Or whether, which is like enough,
 His Highness may have taken huff,
 So seldom sought with invocation,
 Since it has been the reigning fashion
 To disregard his inspiration,

}

I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw through midnight vapour,
The glimm'ring of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
T' accelerate a creeping pen !
Oh for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso !
'Tis here ; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco, finely mill'd,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses.

Oh Nymph of Transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or list'ning with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverized it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or whether, touch'd with fire it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the Bard, if Bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe ;
So may no blight infest thy plains,
And no unseasonable rains,

And so may smiling Peace once more
 Visit America's sad shore ;
 And thou, secure from all alarms,
 Of thund'ring drums, and glitt'ring arms,
 Rove unconfined beneath the shade
 Thy wide expanded leaves have made ;
 So may thy votaries encrease,
 And fumigation never cease.
 May Newton with renewed delights
 Perform thine odorif'rous rites,
 While clouds of incense half divine
 Involve thy disappearing shrine ;
 And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
 Be always filling, never full..

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 6, 1782.

Yesterday, and not before, I received your letter, dated the 11th of June, from the hands of Mr. Small. I should have been happy to have known him sooner; but whether being afraid of that horned monster, a Methodist, or whether from a principle of delicacy, or deterred by a flood, which has rolled for some weeks between Clifton and Olney, I know not,—he has favoured me only with a taste of his company, and will leave me, on Saturday evening, to regret that our acquaintance, so lately begun, must be so soon suspended. He will dine with us that day, which I reckon a fortunate circumstance, as I shall have an opportunity to introduce him to the liveliest and most entertaining woman in the country. I have seen him but for half an hour, yet, without boasting much of discernment, I see

that he is polite, easy, cheerful, and sensible. An old man thus qualified, cannot fail to charm the lady in question. As to his religion, I leave it—I am neither his bishop nor his confessor. A man of his character, and recommended by you, would be welcome here, were he a Gentoo, or a Mahometan.

I learn from him that certain friends of mine, whom I have been afraid to enquire about by letter, are alive and well. The current of twenty years has swept away so many, whom I once knew, that I doubted whether it might be advisable to send my love to your mother and your sisters. They may have thought my silence strange, but they have here the reason of it. Assure them of my affectionate remembrance, and that nothing would make me happier than to receive you all in my green-house, your own Mrs. Hill included. It is fronted with myrtles, and lined with mats, and would just hold us, for Mr. Small informs me *your* dimensions are much the same as usual.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Nov. 5, 1782.

Charissime Taurorum—

Quot sunt, vel fuerunt, vel posthac aliis erunt in annis.

We shall rejoice to see you, and I just write to tell you so. Whatever else I want, I have, at least, this quality in common with publicans and sinners, that I love those that love me, and, for that reason, you in particular. Your warm and affectionate manner demands it of me. And though I consider your love as growing out of a mistaken expectation that you shall see me a spiritual man hereafter, I do not love you much the less

for it. I only regret that I did not know you intimately in those happier days, when the frame of my heart and mind was such as might have made a connexion with me not altogether unworthy of you.

I only add Mrs. Unwin's remembrances, and that I am glad you believe me to be, what I truly am,

Your faithful and affectionate,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 11, 1782.

Your shocking scrawl, as you term it, was, however, a very welcome one. The character, indeed, has not quite the neatness and beauty of an engraving; but if it cost me some pains to decypher it, they were well rewarded by the minute information it conveyed. I am glad your health is such, that you have nothing more to complain of than may be expected on the down-hill side of life. If mine is better than yours, it is to be attributed, I suppose, principally, to the constant enjoyment of country air and retirement; the most perfect regularity in matters of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and a happy emancipation from every thing that wears the face of business. I lead the life I always wished for, and, the single circumstance of dependence excepted, (which, between ourselves, is very contrary to my predominant humour and disposition,) have no want left broad enough for another wish to stand upon.

You may not, perhaps, live to see your trees attain to the dignity of timber—I, nevertheless, approve of your planting, and the disinterested spirit that prompts you to it. Few peo-

ple plant, when they are young; a thousand other less profitable amusements divert their attention; and most people, when the date of youth is once expired, think it too late to begin. I can tell you, however, for your comfort and encouragement, that when a grove, which Major Cowper had planted, was of eighteen years' growth, it was no small ornament to his grounds, and afforded as complete a shade as could be desired. Were I as old as your mother, in whose longevity I rejoice, and the more, because I consider it as, in some sort, a pledge and assurance of yours, and should come to the possession of land worth planting, I would begin to-morrow, and even without previously insisting upon a bond from Providence that I should live five years longer.

I saw last week a gentleman who was lately at Hastings. I asked him where he lodged. He replied at P——'s. I next enquired after the poor man's wife, whether alive or dead. He answered, dead. So then, said I, she has scolded her last; and a sensible old man will go down to his grave in peace. Mr. P——, to be sure, is of no great consequence, either to you, or to me; but having so fair an opportunity to inform myself about him, I could not neglect it. It gives me pleasure to learn somewhat of a man I knew a little of, so many years since, and for that reason merely I mention the circumstance to you.

I find a single expression in your letter which needs correction. You say I carefully avoid paying you a visit at Wargrave. Not so;—but connected as I happily am, and rooted where I am, and not having travelled these twenty years—being, besides, of an indolent temper, and having spirits that cannot bear a bustle—all these are so many insuperables in the way. They are not, however, in yours; and if you and Mrs. Hill will make the experiment, you shall find yourselves as

welcome here, both to me and to Mrs. Unwin, as it is possible you can be any where.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 1782.

I am to thank you for a fine cod, which came most opportunely to make a figure on our table, on an occasion that made him singularly welcome. I write, and you send me a fish. This is very well, but not altogether what I want. I wish to hear from you, because the fish, though he serves to convince me that you have me still in remembrance, says not a word of those that sent him, and with respect to your and Mrs. Hill's health, prosperity, and happiness, leaves me as much in the dark as before. You are aware, likewise, that where there is an exchange of letters, it is much easier to write. But I know the multiplicity of your affairs, and therefore perform my part of the correspondence as well as I can, convinced that you would not omit yours, if you could help it.

Three days since I received a note from old Mr. Small, which was more than civil—it was warm and friendly. The good veteran excuses himself for not calling upon me, on account of the feeble state in which a fit of the gout had left him. He tells me, however, that he has seen Mrs. Hill, and your improvements at Wargrave, which will soon become an ornament to the place. May they! and may you both live long to enjoy them! I shall be sensibly mortified if the season and his gout together, should deprive me of the pleasure of receiving him

here; for he is a man much to my taste, and quite an unique in this country.

When it suits you to send me some more of Elliott's medicines, I shall be obliged to you. My eyes are, in general, better than I remember them to have been, since I first opened them upon this sublunary stage, which is now a little more than half a century ago; yet I do not think myself safe, either without those remedies, or when, through long keeping, they have, in part, lost their virtue. I seldom use them without thinking of our trip to Maidenhead, where I first experienced their efficacy. We are growing old; but this is between ourselves: the world knows nothing of the matter. Mr. Small tells me you look much as you did; and as for me, being grown rather plump, the ladies tell me I am as young as ever.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Nov. 23, 1782.

Accept my thanks for the trouble you take in vending my poems, and still more for the interest you take in their success. My authorship is undoubtedly pleased, when I hear that they are approved either by the great or the small; but to be approved by the great, as Horace observed many years ago, is fame indeed. Having met with encouragement, I consequently wish to write again; but wishes are a very small part of the qualifications necessary for such a purpose. Many a man who has succeeded tolerably well in his first attempt, has spoiled all by the second. But it just occurs to me that I told you so once before, and if my memory had served me with the intelligence

a minute sooner, I would not have repeated the observation now.

The winter sets in with great severity. The rigour of the season, and the advanced price of grain, are very threatening to the poor. It is well with those that can feed upon a promise, and wrap themselves up warm in the robe of salvation. A good fire-side and a well-spread table are but very indifferent substitutes for these better accommodations; so very indifferent, that I would gladly exchange them both, for the rags and the unsatisfied hunger of the poorest creature that looks forward with hope to a better world, and weeps tears of joy in the midst of penury and distress. What a world is this! How mysteriously governed, and, in appearance, left to itself. One man, having squandered thousands at a gaming-table, finds it convenient to travel; gives his estate to somebody to manage for him; amuses himself a few years in France and Italy; returns, perhaps, wiser than he went, having acquired knowledge which, but for his follies, he would never have acquired; again makes a splendid figure at home, shines in the senate, governs his country as its minister, is admired for his abilities, and, if successful, adored, at least by a party. When he dies he is praised as a demigod, and his monument records every thing but his vices. The exact contrast of such a picture is to be found in many cottages at Olney. I have no need to describe them; you know the characters I mean. They love God, they trust him, they pray to him in secret, and though he means to reward them openly, the day of recompense is delayed. In the mean time they suffer every thing that infirmity and poverty can inflict upon them. Who would suspect, that has not a spiritual eye to discern it, that the fine gentleman was one whom his Maker had in abhorrence, and the wretch last-mentioned, dear to him as the apple of his eye? It is no wonder that the world, who are not in the

secret, find themselves obliged, some of them, to doubt a Providence, and others, absolutely to deny it, when almost all the real virtue there is in it, is to be found living and dying in a state of neglected obscurity, and all the vices of others cannot exclude them from the privilege of worship and honour! But behind the curtain the matter is explained; very little, however, to the satisfaction of the great.

If you ask me why I have written thus, and to you especially, to whom there was no need to write thus, I can only reply, that having a letter to write, and no news to communicate, I picked up the first subject I found, and pursued it as far as was convenient for my purpose.

Mr. Newton and I are of one mind on the subject of patriotism. Our dispute was no sooner begun than it ended. It would be well, perhaps, if, when two disputants begin to engage, their friends would hurry each into a separate chaise, and order them to opposite points of the compass. Let one travel twenty miles east; the other, as many west; then let them write their opinions by the post. Much altercation and chafing of the spirit would be prevented; they would sooner come to a right understanding, and running away from each other, would carry on the combat more judiciously, in exact proportion to the distance.

My love to that gentleman, if you please; and tell him, that, like him, though I love my country, I hate its follies and its sins, and had rather see it scourged in mercy, than judicially hardened by prosperity.

Yours, my dear Madam, as ever,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 7, 1782.

At seven o'clock this evening, being the seventh of December, I imagine I see you in your box at the coffee-house. No doubt the waiter, as ingenious and adroit as his predecessors were before him, raises the tea-pot to the ceiling with his right hand, while in his left the tea-cup descending almost to the floor, receives a limpid stream; limpid in its descent, but no sooner has it reached its destination, than frothing and foaming to the view, it becomes a roaring syllabub. This is the nineteenth winter since I saw you in this situation; and if nineteen more pass over me before I die, I shall still remember a circumstance we have often laughed at.

How different is the complexion of your evenings and mine! —yours, spent amid the ceaseless hum that proceeds from the inside of fifty noisy and busy periwigs; mine, by a domestic fire-side, in a retreat as silent as retirement can make it; where no noise is made but what we make for our own amusement. For instance, here are two rustics, and your humble servant in company. One of the ladies has been playing on the harpsichord, while I, with the other, have been playing at battledore and shuttlecock. A little dog, in the mean time, howling under the chair of the former, performed, in the vocal way, to admiration. This entertainment over, I began my letter, and having nothing more important to communicate, have given you an account of it. I know you love dearly to be idle, when you can find an opportunity to be so; but as such opportunities are rare with you, I thought it possible that a short description of the idleness I enjoy might give you pleasure. The happiness we cannot call

our own, we yet seem to possess, while we sympathise with our friends who can.

The papers tell me that peace is at hand, and that it is at a great distance; that the siege of Gibraltar is abandoned, and that it is to be still continued. It is happy for me, that though I love my country, I have but little curiosity. There was a time when these contradictions would have distressed me, but I have learnt by experience that it is best for little people like myself to be patient, and to wait till time affords the intelligence which no speculations of theirs can ever furnish.

I thank you for a fine cod with oysters, and hope that ere long, I shall have to thank you for procuring me Elliott's medicines. Every time I feel the least uneasiness in either eye, I tremble lest, my *Æsculapius* being departed, my infallible remedy should be lost for ever. Adieu. My respects to Mrs. Hill.

Yours, faithfully,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 26, 1783.

It is reported among persons of the best intelligence at Olney—the barber, the schoolmaster, and the drummer of a corps quartered at this place, that the belligerent powers are at last reconciled, the articles of the treaty adjusted, and that peace is at the door. I saw this morning, at nine o'clock, a group of about twelve figures very closely engaged in a conference, as I suppose, upon the same subject. The scene of consultation was a blacksmith's shed, very comfortably screened from the wind, and directly opposed to the morning sun. Some held their

hands behind them, some had them folded across their bosom, and others had thrust them into their breeches pockets. Every man's posture bespoke a pacific turn of mind; but the distance being too great for their words to reach me, nothing transpired. I am willing, however, to hope that the secret will not be a secret long, and that you and I, equally interested in the event, though not, perhaps, equally well-informed, shall soon have an opportunity to rejoice in the completion of it. The powers of Europe have clashed with each other to a fine purpose; that the Americans, at length declared independent, may keep themselves so, if they can; and that what the parties, who have thought proper to dispute upon that point, have wrested from each other, in the course of the conflict, may be, in the issue of it, restored to the proper owner. Nations may be guilty of a conduct that would render an individual infamous for ever; and yet carry their heads high, talk of their glory, and despise their neighbours. Your opinions and mine, I mean our political ones, are not exactly of a piece, yet I cannot think otherwise upon this subject than I have always done. England, more, perhaps, through the fault of her generals than her councils, has in some instances acted with a spirit of cruel animosity she was never chargeable with till now. But this is the worst that can be said. On the other hand, the Americans, who, if they had contented themselves with a struggle for lawful liberty, would have deserved applause, seem to me to have incurred the guilt of parricide, by renouncing their parent, by making her ruin their favourite object, and by associating themselves with her worst enemy, for the accomplishment of their purpose. France, and of course, Spain, have acted a treacherous, a thievish part. They have stolen America from England, and whether they are able to possess themselves of that jewel or not hereafter, it was doubtless what they intended. Holland appears to me in a

meaner light than any of them. They quarrelled with a friend for an enemy's sake. The French led them by the nose, and the English have thrashed them for suffering it. My views of the contest being, and having been always, such, I have consequently brighter hopes for England than her situation sometime since seemed to justify. She is the only injured party. America may, perhaps, call her the aggressor; but if she were so, America has not only repelled the injury, but done a greater. As to the rest, if perfidy, treachery, avarice, and ambition, can prove their cause to have been a rotten one, those proofs are found upon them. I think, therefore, that whatever scourge may be prepared for England, on some future day, her ruin is not yet to be expected.

Acknowledge, now, that I am worthy of a place under the shed I described, and that I should make no small figure among the *quidnuncs* of Olney.

I wish the society you have formed may prosper. Your subjects will be of greater importance, and discussed with more sufficiency. The earth is a grain of sand, but the spiritual interests of man are commensurate with the heavens.*

Pray remind Mr. Bull, who has too much genius to have a good memory, that he has an account to settle for Mrs. Unwin with her grocer, and give our love to him. Accept for yourself and Mrs. Newton your just share of the same commodity, with our united thanks for a very fine barrel of oysters. This, indeed, is rather commending the barrel than its contents. I should say, therefore, for a barrel of very fine oysters.

Yours, my dear friend, as ever,

W. C.

* Mr. Hayley has transferred the last sentence of this paragraph to a letter to the same correspondent, dated Feb. 8, 1783. There it was, of course, *his* reflection; here it is *Cowper's*; which must be the editor's apology for the duplicate.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Feb. 2, 1783.

I give you joy of the restoration of that sincere and firm friendship between the Kings of England and France, that has been so long interrupted. It is a great pity, when hearts so cordially united are divided by trifles. Thirteen pitiful colonies, which the King of England chose to keep, and the King of France to obtain, if he could, have disturbed that harmony which would else, no doubt, have subsisted between those illustrious personages to this moment. If the King of France, whose greatness of mind is only equalled by that of his Queen, had regarded them, unworthy of his notice as they were, with an eye of suitable indifference; or, had he thought it a matter deserving in any degree his princely attention, that they were, in reality, the property of his good friend the King of England^a, or, had the latter been less obstinately determined to hold fast his interest in them, and could he, with that civility and politeness in which monarchs are expected to excel, have entreated his Majesty of France to accept a bagatelle, for which he seemed to have conceived so strong a predilection, all this mischief had been prevented. But monarchs, alas! crowned, and sceptred, as they are, are yet but men; they fall out, and are reconciled, just like the meanest of their subjects. I cannot, however, sufficiently admire the moderation and magnanimity of the King of England. His dear friend on the other side of the channel, has not indeed taken actual possession of the colonies in question, but he has effectually wrested them out of the hands of their original owner, who, nevertheless, letting fall the extinguisher of patience upon the flame of his resentment, and glowing with no other flame than that of the sincerest affection, embraces the

King of France again, gives him Senegal and Goree in Africa, gives him the islands he had taken from him in the West, gives him his conquered territories in the East, gives him a fishery upon the banks of Newfoundland; and, as if all this were too little, merely because he knows that Louis has a partiality for the King of Spain, gives to the latter an island in the Mediterranean, which thousands of English had purchased with their lives; and, in America, all, that he wanted, at least all that he could ask. No doubt there will be great cordiality between this royal trio for the future: and though wars may perhaps be kindled between their posterity, some ages hence, the present generation shall never be witnesses of such a calamity again. I expect soon to hear that the Queen of France, who, just before this rupture happened, made the Queen of England a present of a watch, has, in acknowledgment of all these acts of kindness, sent her also a seal wherewith to ratify the treaty. Surely she can do no less.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 8, 1783.

When I consider the peace as the work of our ministers, and reflect that with more wisdom, or more spirit, they might, perhaps, have procured a better, I confess it does not please me. Such another peace would ruin us, I suppose, as effectually as a war protracted to the extremest inch of our ability to bear it. I do not think it just that the French should plunder us, and be paid for doing it; nor does it appear to me that there was absolute necessity for such tameness on our part, as we discover in the present treaty. We give away all that is demanded, and re-

ceive nothing but what was our own before. So far as this stain upon our national honour, and this diminution of our national property, are a judgment upon our iniquities, I submit, and have no doubt but that ultimately it will be found to be judgment mixed with mercy.—But so far as I see it to be the effect of French knavery and British despondency, I feel it as a disgrace, and grumble at it as a wrong. I dislike it the more, because the peacemaker has been so immoderately praised for his performance, which is, in my opinion, a contemptible one enough. Had he made the French smart for their baseness, I would have praised him too ;—a minister should have shown his wisdom by securing some points, at least, for the benefit of his country. A schoolboy might have made concessions. After all, perhaps, the worst consequence of this awkward business will be dissension in the two Houses, and dissatisfaction throughout the kingdom. They that love their country, will be grieved to see her trampled upon; and they that love mischief will have a fair opportunity of making it. Were I a member of the Commons, even with the same religious sentiments as impress me now, I should think it my duty to condemn it.

You will suppose me a politician ; but in truth I am nothing less. These are the thoughts that occur to me while I read the newspaper ; and when I have laid it down, I feel myself more interested in the success of my early cucumbers, than in any part of this great and important subject. If I see them droop a little, I forget that we have been many years at war ; that we have made an humiliating peace ; that we are deeply in debt, and unable to pay. All these reflections are absorbed at once in the anxiety I feel for a plant, the fruit of which I cannot eat, when I have procured it. How wise, how consistent, how respectable a creature is man !

Because we have nobody to preach the gospel at Olney, Mr.

— waits only for a barn, at present occupied by a strolling company; and the moment they quit it, he begins. He is disposed to think the dissatisfied of all denominations may possibly be united under his standard; and that the great work of forming a more extensive and more established interest than any of them, is reserved for him.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her kind letter, and for executing her commissions. We truly love you both, think of you often, and one of us prays for you;—the other will, when he can pray for himself.*

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 13, 1783.

I am so perfectly at leisure, that I am less excusable for not writing frequently to you, than you for not writing at all to me. It is not very probable, that in the hurry of so much business, you should form a wish to know in what manner I spend my time; and yet if that information should come, though uninvited by a wish, it may not be altogether unacceptable.

My time passes partly in finding fault with a peace, which, deplorable as our condition is, I suppose nobody approves; and partly in quarrelling with a rainy season, and a most dirty country. I raise cucumbers which I cannot eat, merely because it is difficult to raise them; and the conquest of difficulties is one of the most agreeable things in the world, because it is one of the most flattering to our pride. When I can, I walk, but

* The former part of this concluding paragraph was published by Mr. Hayley; but for the sake of the striking sentence which he omitted, the editor ventures to repeat it here.

always with a lady under my arm, which again is amusing, and for the same reason; for to extricate the ladies out of all the bogs into which I lead them, is no small proof of ingenuity and prowess. Thus I spend my mornings; and my evenings in winding their silk and cotton, or reading history to the afore-said ladies. Sigh, now, and say—Happy creature! how I envy you. Envy me you must.

[Torn off.]

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 24, 1783.

A weakness in one of my eyes may possibly shorten my letter, but I mean to make it as long as my present materials, and my ability to write, can suffice for.

I am almost sorry to say that I am reconciled to the peace, being reconciled to it not upon principles of approbation, but necessity. The deplorable condition of the country, insisted on by the friends of administration, and not denied by their adversaries, convinces me that our only refuge under Heaven was in the treaty with which I quarrelled. The treaty itself I find less objectionable than I did, Lord Shelburne having given a colour to some of the articles that makes them less painful in the contemplation. But my opinion upon the whole affair is, that now is the time (if indeed there is salvation for the country) for Providence to interpose to save it. A peace with the greatest political advantages would not have healed us; a peace with none may procrastinate our ruin for a season, but cannot ultimately prevent it. The prospect may make all tremble who have no trust in God, and even they that trust may tremble. The peace will probably be of short duration; and, in the or-

dinary course of things, another war must end us. A great country in ruins will not be beheld with eyes of indifference, even by those who have a better country to look to. But with them all will be well at last.

As to the Americans, perhaps I do not forgive them as I ought; perhaps I shall always think of them with some resentment as the destroyers, intentionally the destroyers, of this country. They have pushed that point farther than the house of Bourbon could have carried it in half a century. I may be prejudiced against them, but I do not think them equal to the task of establishing an empire. Great men are necessary for such a purpose; and their great men, I believe, are yet unborn. They have had passion and obstinacy enough to do us much mischief; but whether the event will be salutary to themselves or not, must wait for proof. I agree with you, that it is possible, America may become a land of extraordinary evangelical light; but, at the same time, I cannot discover any thing in their new situation peculiarly favourable to such a supposition. They cannot have more liberty of conscience than they had; at least, if that liberty was under any restraint, it was a restraint of their own making. Perhaps a new settlement in church and state may leave them less.—Well—all will be over soon. The time is at hand when an empire will be established that shall fill the earth. Neither statesmen nor generals will lay the foundation of it, but it shall rise at the sound of the trumpet.

I am well in body, but with a mind that would wear out a frame of adamant; yet upon *my* frame, which is not very robust, its effects are not discernible. Mrs. Unwin is in health. Accept our unalienable love to you both.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 7, 1783.

When will you come and tell us what you think of the peace? Is it a good peace in itself, or a good peace only in reference to the ruinous condition of our country? I quarrelled most bitterly with it at first, finding nothing in the terms of it but disgrace and destruction to Great Britain. But having learned since, that we are already destroyed and disgraced, as much as we can be, I like it better, and think myself deeply indebted to the King of France for treating us with so much lenity. The olive-branch, indeed, has neither leaf nor fruit, but it is still an olive-branch. Mr. Newton and I have exchanged several letters on the subject; sometimes considering, like grave politicians as we are, the state of Europe at large; sometimes the state of England in particular; sometimes the conduct of the house of Bourbon; sometimes that of the Dutch; but most especially that of the Americans. We have not differed perhaps very widely, nor even so widely as we seemed to do; but still we have differed. We have, however, managed our dispute with temper, and brought it to a peaceable conclusion. So far, at least, we have given proof of a wisdom which abler politicians than myself would do well to imitate.

How do you like your northern mountaineers? Can a man be a good Christian that goes without breeches? You are better qualified to solve me this question than any man I know, having, as I am informed, preached to many of them, and conversed, no doubt, with some. You must know, I love a Highlander, and think I can see in them what Englishmen once were, but never will be again. Such have been the effects of luxury!

You know that I kept two hares. I have written nothing since I saw you but an epitaph on one of them, which died last week. I send you the *first* impression of it.

Here lies, &c.*

Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March, 7, 1783.

Were my letters composed of materials worthy of your acceptance, they should be longer. There is a subject upon which they who know themselves interested in it are never weary of writing. That subject is not within my reach; and there are few others that do not soon fatigue me. Upon these, however, I might possibly be more diffuse, could I forget that I am writing to *you*, to whom I think it just as improper and absurd to send a sheet full of trifles, as it would be to allow myself that liberty, were I writing to one of the four evangelists. But since you measure *me* with so much exactness, give me leave to requite you in your own way. *Your* manuscript, indeed, is close, and I do not reckon *mine* very lax. You make no margin, it is true; if you did, you would have need of their Lilliputian art, who can enclose the creed within the circle of a shilling; for, upon the nicest comparison, I find your paper an inch smaller every way than mine. Were my writing, therefore, as compact as yours, my letters *with* a margin would be as long as yours without one. Let this consideration, added to

* Vide Cowper's Poems.

that of their futility, prevail with you to think them, if not long, yet long enough.

Yesterday, a body of Highlanders passed through Olney. They are part of that regiment which lately mutinied at Portsmouth. Convinced to a man, that General —— had sold them to the East India Company, they breathe nothing but vengeance, and swear they will pull down his house in Scotland, as soon as they arrive there. The rest of them are quartered at Dunstable, Woburn, and Newport; in all eleven hundred. A party of them, it is said, are to continue some days at Olney. None of their principal officers are with them; either conscious of guilt, or, at least, knowing themselves to be suspected as privy to, and partners in, the iniquitous bargain, they fear the resentment of the corps. The design of government seems to be to break them into small divisions, that they may find themselves, when they reach Scotland, too weak to do much mischief. Forty of them attended Mr. Bull, who found himself singularly happy in an opportunity to address himself to a flock bred upon the Caledonian mountains. He told them he would walk to John O'Groat's house to hear a soldier pray. They are in general so far religious that they will hear none but evangelical preaching; and many of them are said to be truly so. Nevertheless, General ——'s skull was in some danger among them; for he was twice felled to the ground with the butt-end of a muket. The sergeant-major rescued him, or he would have been for ever rendered incapable of selling Highlanders to the India Company. I am obliged to you for your extract from Mr. Bowman's letter. I feel myself sensibly pleased by the approbation of men of taste and learning; but that my vanity may not get too much to windward, my spirits are kept under by a total inability to renew my enterprises in the poetical way.

We love and respect Mrs. Cunningham, and sympathize with her under her many trials. May she arrive in safety ! The severity of the season will, I suppose, retard her journey. We should rejoice more in your joy on the occasion, did not her visit to London look with an unfavourable aspect upon yours to Olney.

We are tolerably well, and love you both.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

When your last letter came, my eye was so much inflamed, that I could not look at your seal. It is better now, and I mean to consider it well when I see it next.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 20, 1783.

My device was intended to represent not my own heart, but the heart of a Christian, mourning and yet rejoicing, pierced with thorns, yet wreathed about with roses. I have the thorn without the rose. My briar is a wintry one, the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains. My days are spent in vanity, and it is impossible for me to spend them otherwise. No man upon earth is more sensible of the unprofitableness of a life like mine, than I am, or groans more heavily under the burden ; but this too is vanity, because it is in vain ; my groans will not bring the remedy, because there is no remedy for me. The time when I seem to be most rationally employed, is when I am reading. My studies, however, are very much confined, and of little use, because I have no books but what I borrow, and nobody will lend me a memory. My own is almost worn

out. I read the Biographia and the Review. If all the readers of the former had memories like mine, the compilers of that work would in vain have laboured to rescue the great names of past ages from oblivion, for what I read to-day, I forget to-morrow. A by-stander might say, This is rather an advantage, the book is always new ;—but I beg the by-stander's pardon ; I can recollect though I cannot remember, and with the book in my hand I recognise those passages which, without the book, I should never have thought of more. The Review pleases me most, because, if the contents escape me, I regret them less, being a very supercilious reader of most modern writers. Either I dislike the subject, or the manner of treating it ; the style is affected, or the matter is disgusting. * * * *

* * * * I see ——— (though he was a learned man, and sometimes wrote like a wise one,) labouring under invincible prejudices against the truth and its professors ; heterodox in his opinion upon some religious subjects, and reasoning most weakly in support of them. How has he toiled to prove that the perdition of the wicked is not eternal, that there may be repentance in hell, and that the devils may be saved at last : thus establishing, as far as in him lies, the belief of a purgatory, and approaching nearer to the church of Rome than ever any Methodist did, though papalizing is the crime with which he charges all of that denomination. When I think of him, I think too of some who shall say hereafter, “ Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wondrous works ? Then shall he say unto them, Depart from me, for I never knew you.” But perhaps he might be enlightened in his last moments, and saved in the very article of dissolution. It is much to be wished, and indeed hoped, that he was. Such a man reprobated in the great day, would be the most melancholy spectacle of all that shall stand at the

left hand hereafter. But I do not think that *many*, or indeed *any* will be found there, who in their lives were sober, virtuous, and sincere, truly pious in the use of their little light, and though ignorant of God, in comparison with some others, yet sufficiently informed to know that He is to be feared, loved, and trusted. An operation is often performed within the curtains of a dying bed, in behalf of such men, that the nurse and the doctor (I mean the doctor and the nurse) have no suspicion of. The soul makes but one step out of darkness into light, and makes that step without a witness. My brother's case has made me very charitable in my opinion about the future state of such men.

We wait with anxiety to be informed what news you receive from Scotland. Present our love, if you please, to Miss Cunningham. I saw in the Gentleman's Magazine for last month, an account of a physician who has discovered a new method of treating consumptive cases, which has succeeded wonderfully in the trial. He finds the seat of the distemper in the stomach, and cures it principally by emetics. The old method of encountering the disorder has proved so unequal to the task, that I should be much inclined to any new practice that came well recommended. He is spoken of as a sensible and judicious man, but his name I have forgot.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 12, 1783.

They that have found a God, and are permitted to worship him, have found a treasure, of which, highly as they may prize it, they have but very scanty and limited conceptions.

Take my word for it,—the word of a man singularly well qualified to give his evidence in this matter, who having enjoyed the privilege some years, has been deprived of it more, and has no hope that he shall live to recover it. These are my Sunday morning speculations,—the sound of the bells suggested them, or rather, gave them such an emphasis that they forced their way into my pen, in spite of me; for though I do not often commit them to paper, they are never absent from my mind.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 3, 1783.

My green-house, fronted with myrtles, and where I hear nothing but the pattering of a fine shower and the sound of distant thunder, wants only the fumes of your pipe to make it perfectly delightful. Tobacco was not known in the golden age. So much the worse for the golden age. This age of iron or lead, would be insupportable without it; and therefore we may reasonably suppose that the happiness of those better days would have been much improved by the use of it. We hope that you and your son are perfectly recovered. The season has been most unfavourable to animal life; and I, who am merely animal, have suffered much by it.

Though I should be glad to write, I write little or nothing. The time for such fruit is not yet come; but I expect it, and I wish for it. I want amusement; and, deprived of that, have none to supply the place of it. I send you, however, according to my promise to send you every thing, two stanzas composed

at the request of Lady Austen. She wanted words to a tune she much admired, and I gave her the following;

ON PEACE.

No longer I follow a sound, &c.*

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 8, 1783.

I have been lately more dejected and more distressed than usual; more harassed by dreams in the night, and more deeply poisoned by them in the following day. I know not what is portended by an alteration for the worse, after eleven years of misery; but firmly believe that it is not designed as the introduction of a change for the better. You know not what I suffered while you were here, nor was there any need you should. Your friendship for me would have made you in some degree a partaker of my woes; and your share in them would have been increased by your inability to help me. Perhaps, indeed, they took a keener edge from the consideration of your presence. The friend of my heart, the person with whom I had formerly taken sweet counsel, no longer useful to me as a minister, no longer pleasant to me as a Christian, was a spectacle that must necessarily add the bitterness of mortification to the sadness of despair. I now see a long winter before me, and am to get through it as I can. I know the ground, before I tread upon it. It is hollow; it is agitated; it suffers shocks in every direction;

* Vide Poems, vol. iii. p. 98.

it is like the soil of Calabria—all whirlpool and undulation. But I must reel through it; at least, if I be not swallowed up by the way.

Yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 20, 1783.

I have nothing to say on political subjects, for two reasons; first, because I know none that at present would prove very amusing, especially to you who love your country; and, secondly, because there are none that I have the vanity to think myself qualified to discuss. I must beg leave, however, to rejoice a little at the failure of the Caisse d'Escomptes, because I think the French have well deserved it; and to mourn equally that the Royal George cannot be weighed: the rather, because I wrote two poems, one Latin and one English, to encourage the attempt. The former of these only having been published, which the sailors would understand but little of, may be the reason, perhaps, why they have not succeeded. Believe me, my friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 22, 1783.

I have made a point of saying no fine things to Mr. Bacon, upon an occasion that would well have justified them;

deterred by a *Caveat* he entered in his letter. Nothing can be more handsome than the present, nor more obliging than the manner in which he has made it. I take it for granted that the plate is, line for line, and stroke for stroke, an exact representation of his performance, as nearly at least, as light and shade can exhibit, upon a flat surface, the effect of a piece of statuary. I may be allowed therefore to say that I admire it. My situation affords me no opportunity to cultivate the science of connoisseurship ; neither would there be much propriety in my speaking the language of one to you, who disclaim the character. But we both know when we are pleased.—It occurs to me, however, that I ought to say what it is that pleases me, for a general commendation, where there are so many particular beauties, would be insipid and unjust.

I think the figure of Lord Chatham singularly graceful, and his countenance full of the character that belongs to him. It speaks not only great ability and consummate skill, but a tender and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the charge committed to him. In the figure of the City, there is all that *empressement* (pardon a French term, it expresses my idea better than any English one that occurs,) that the importance of her errand calls for ; and it is noble in its air, though in a posture of supplication. But the figure of Commerce is indeed a perfect beauty. It is a literal truth, that I felt the tears flush into my eyes while I looked at her. The idea of so much elegance and grace having found so powerful a protection, was irresistible. There is a complacency and serenity in the air and countenance of Britannia, more suited to her dignity than that exultation and triumph which a less judicious hand might have dressed her in. She seems happy to sit at the feet of her deliverer.—I have most of the monuments in the Abbey by heart, but I recollect none that ever gave me so much pleasure. The

faces are all expressive, and the figures are all graceful.—If you think the opinion of so unlearned a spectator worth communicating, and that I have not said more than Mr. Bacon's modesty can bear without offence, you are welcome to make him privy to my sentiments. I know not why he should be hurt by just praise; his fine talent is a gift, and all the merit of it is His property who gave it.

Believe me, my dear friend,

sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. C.

I am out of your debt.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 3, 1783.

My time is short, and my opportunity not the most favourable. My letter will consequently be short likewise, and perhaps not very intelligible. I find it no very easy matter to bring my mind into that degree of composure, which is necessary to the arrangement either of words or matter. You will naturally expect to receive some account of this confusion that I describe, some reason given for it.—On Saturday night at eleven o'clock, when I had not been in bed five minutes, I was alarmed by a cry of fire, announced by two or three shrill screams upon our staircase. Our servants, who were going to bed, saw it from their windows, and in appearance so near, that they thought our house in danger. I immediately rose, and putting by the curtain, saw sheets of fire rising above the ridge of Mr. Palmer's house, opposite to ours. The deception was such, that I had no doubt it had begun with *him*, but soon found that it was rather farther off. In fact, it was at three

places ;—in the out-houses belonging to George Griggs, Lucy and Abigail Tyrrel. Having broke out in three different parts, it is supposed to have been maliciously kindled. A tar-barrel and a quantity of tallow made a most tremendous blaze, and the buildings it had seized upon being all thatched, the appearance became every moment more formidable. Providentially, the night was perfectly calm, so calm that candles without lanterns, of which there were multitudes in the street, burnt as steadily as in a house. By four in the morning it was so far reduced, that all danger seemed to be over ; but the confusion it had occasioned was almost infinite. Every man who supposed his dwelling-house in jeopardy, emptied it as fast as he could, and conveyed his moveables to the house of some neighbour, supposed to be more secure. Ours, in the space of two hours, was so filled with all sorts of lumber, that we had not even room for a chair by the fire-side. George Griggs is the principal sufferer. He gave eighteen guineas, or nearly that sum, to a woman whom, in his hurry, he mistook for his wife, but the supposed wife walked off with the money, and he will probably never recover it. He has likewise lost forty pounds' worth of wool. London never exhibited a scene of greater depredation, drunkenness, and riot. Every thing was stolen that could be got at, and every drop of liquor drunk that was not guarded. Only one thief has yet been detected ; a woman of the name of J——, who was stopped by young Handscomb with an apron full of plunder. He was forced to strike her down, before he could wrest it from her. Could you visit the place, you would see a most striking proof of a Providence interposing to stop the progress of the flames. They had almost reached, that is to say, within six yards of Daniel Raban's wood-pile, in which were fifty pounds' worth of faggots and furze ; and exactly there they were extinguished : otherwise,

especially if a breath of air had happened to move, all that side of the town must probably have been consumed. After all this dreadful conflagration, we find nothing burnt but the out-houses; and the dwellings to which they belonged have suffered only the damage of being unroofed on that side next the fire. No lives were lost, nor any limbs broken. Mrs. Unwin, whose spirits served her while the hubbub lasted, and the day after, begins to feel the effect of it now. But I hope she will be relieved from it soon, being better this evening than I expected. As for me, I am impregnable to all such assaults. I have nothing, however, but this subject in my mind, and it is in vain that I invite any other into it. Having, therefore, exhausted this, I finish, assuring you of our united love, and hoping to find myself in a frame of mind more suited to my employment when I write next.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 17, 1783.

The country around us is much alarmed with apprehensions of fire. Two have happened, since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to eleven thousand pounds, and another, at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not learnt the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford, threatening to burn the town; and the inhabitants have been so intimidated, as to have placed a guard in many parts of it, several nights past. Since our conflagration here, we have sent two women and a boy to the justice, for depredation; S—— R——, for stealing a piece of beef, which, in her excuse,

she said she intended to take care of. This lady, whom you well remember, escaped for want of evidence; not that evidence was indeed wanting, but our men of Gotham judged it unnecessary to send it. With her went the woman I mentioned before, who, it seems, has made some sort of profession, but upon this occasion allowed herself a latitude of conduct rather inconsistent with it, having filled her apron with wearing apparel, which she likewise intended to take care of. She would have gone to the county gaol, had William Raban, the baker's son, who prosecuted, insisted upon it; but he goodnaturedly, though I think weakly, interposed in her favour, and begged her off. The young gentleman who accompanied these fair ones, is the junior son of Molly Boswell. He had stolen some iron-work, the property of Griggs, the butcher. Being convicted, he was ordered to be whipt, which operation he underwent at the cart's tail, from the stone-house to the high arch, and back again. He seemed to shew great fortitude, but it was all an imposition upon the public. The beadle, who performed it, had filled his left hand with red ochre, through which, after every stroke, he drew the lash of his whip, leaving the appearance of a wound upon the skin, but in reality not hurting him at all. This being perceived by Mr. Constable H——, who followed the beadle, he applied his cane, without any such management or precaution, to the shoulders of the too merciful executioner. The scene immediately became more interesting. The beadle could by no means be prevailed upon to strike hard, which provoked the constable to strike harder; and this double flogging continued, till a lass of Silver-end, pitying the pitiful beadle thus suffering under the hands of the pitiless constable, joined the procession, and placing herself immediately behind the latter, seized him by his capillary club, and pulling him backwards by the same, slapt his face with a most Amazonian fury. This concatenation

of events has taken up more of my paper than I intended it should, but I could not forbear to inform you how the beadle threshed the thief, the constable the beadle, and the lady the constable, and how the thief was the only person concerned who suffered nothing. Mr. Teedon has been here, and is gone again. He came to thank me for some left-off clothes. In answer to our inquiries after his health, he replied that he had a slow fever, which made him take all possible care not to inflame his blood. I admitted his prudence, but in his particular instance, could not very clearly discern the need of it. Pump water will not heat him much; and, to speak a little in his own style, more inebriating fluids are to him, I fancy, not very attainable. He brought us news, the truth of which, however, I do not vouch for, that the town of Bedford was actually on fire yesterday, and the flames not extinguished when the bearer of the tidings left it.

Swift observes, when he is giving his reasons why the preacher is elevated always above his hearers, that let the crowd be as great as it will below, there is always room enough over head. If the French philosophers can carry their art of flying to the perfection they desire, the observation may be reversed, the crowd will be over-head, and they will have most room, who stay below. I can assure you, however, upon my own experience, that this way of travelling is very delightful. I dreamt a night or two since, that I drove myself through the upper regions in a balloon and pair, with the greatest ease and security. Having finished the tour I intended, I made a short turn, and, with one flourish of my whip, descended; my horses prancing and curvetting with an infinite share of spirit, but without the least danger, either to me or my vehicle. The time, we may suppose, is at hand, and seems to be prognosticated by my dream, when these airy excursions will be universal, when

judges will fly the circuit, and bishops their visitations; and when the tour of Europe will be performed with much greater speed, and with equal advantage, by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say, that they have made it.

I beg you will accept for yourself and yours our unfeigned love, and remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon, when you see him.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 23, 1783.

Your opinion of voyages and travels would spoil an appetite less keen than mine; but being pretty much, perhaps more than any man who can be said to enjoy his liberty, confined to a spot, and being very desirous of knowing all that can be known of this same planet of ours, while I have the honour to belong to it,—and having, besides, no other means of information at my command, I am constrained to be satisfied with narratives, not always, indeed, to be implicitly depended upon, but which, being subjected to the exercise of a little consideration, cannot materially deceive us. Swinburn's is a book I had fixed upon, and determined, if possible, to procure, being pleased with some extracts from it, which I found in the Review. I need hardly add that I shall be much obliged to Mrs. Hill for a sight of it. I account myself truly and much indebted to that lady for the trouble she is so kind as to take upon my account, and shall esteem myself her debtor for all the amusement I meet with, in the southern hemisphere, should I be so fortunate as to get there. My reading is pretty much circumscribed, both by

want of books and the influence of particular reasons. Politics are my abhorrence, being almost always hypothetical, fluctuating, and impracticable. Philosophy—I should have said natural philosophy, mathematically studied, does not suit me; and such exhibitions of that subject, as are calculated for less learned readers, I have read in former days, and remember in the present. Poetry, English poetry, I never touch, being pretty much addicted to the writing of it, and knowing that much intercourse with those gentlemen betrays us unavoidably into a habit of imitation, which I hate and despise most cordially.

I am glad my uncle is so well, and that he found new beauties in so old an acquaintance as the scene at Hastings. My most affectionate respects to him, if you please, when you see him next.—If *he* be the happiest man, who has least money in the funds, there are few upon earth whom I have any occasion to envy. I would consent, however, to have my pounds multiplied into thousands, even at the hazard of all I might feel from that tormenting passion. I send nothing to the papers myself, but Unwin sometimes sends for me. His receptacle of my squibs is the Public Advertiser; but they are very few, and my present occupations are of a kind that will still have a tendency to make them fewer.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 30, 1783.

I have neither long visits to pay nor to receive, nor ladies to spend hours in telling me that which might be told in five minutes, yet often find myself obliged to be an economist

of time, and to make the most of a short opportunity. Let our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them, in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us, under that imposing character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and plead its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the Antediluvian world; that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How then could seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly, and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goats-milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stript off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chace, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough, I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the mean time the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an

old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus what with tilling the ground, and eating the fruit of it, hunting and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied, as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find at the end of many centuries, that they had all slipped through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow. What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this? Thus, however, it is, and if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so.

This by way of introduction; now for my letter. Mr. Scott is desired by Mr. De Coetlegon to contribute to the Theological Review, of which, I suppose, that gentleman is a manager. He says he has insured your assistance, and at the same time desires mine, either in prose or verse. He did well to apply to you, because you can afford him substantial help; but as for me, had he known me better, he would never have suspected me for a theologian, either in rhyme or otherwise.

Lord Dartmouth's Mr. Wright spent near two hours with me this morning; a respectable old man, whom I always see with pleasure, both for his master's sake and for his own. I was glad to learn from him that his lordship has better health than he has enjoyed for some years.

Believe me, my dear friend, your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 15, 1783.

I know not how it fares with you, at a time when philosophy has just brought forth her most extraordinary production, not excepting, perhaps, that prodigy, a ship, in all respects complete, and equal to the task of circumnavigating the globe. My mind, however, is frequently getting into these balloons, and is busy in multiplying speculations as airy as the regions through which they pass. The last account from France, which seems so well authenticated, has changed my jocularity upon this occasion into serious expectation. The invention of these new vehicles is yet in its infancy, yet already they seem to have attained a degree of perfection which navigation did not reach, till ages of experience had matured it, and science had exhausted both her industry and her skill, in its improvement. I am aware, indeed, that the first boat or canoe that was ever formed, though rude in its construction—perhaps not constructed at all, being only a hollow tree that had fallen casually into the water, and which, though furnished with neither sails nor oars, might yet be guided by a pole—was a more perfect creature in its kind than a balloon at present; the single circumstance of its manageable nature giving it a clear superiority both in respect of safety and convenience. But the atmosphere, though a much thinner medium, we well know, resists the impression made upon it by the tail of a bird, as effectually as the water that of a ship's rudder. Pope, when inculcating one of his few useful lessons, and directing mankind to the providence of God, as the true source of all their wisdom, says beautifully—

Learn of the little Nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

It is easy to parody these lines, so as to give them an accommodation and suitableness to the present purpose.

Learn of the circle-making kite to fly,
Spread the fan-tail, and wheel about the sky.

It is certain, at least, that nothing within the reach of human ingenuity will be left unattempted to accomplish, and add all that is wanting to this last effort of philosophical contrivance. The approximating powers of the telescope, and the powers by which the thunder-storm is delivered of its contents peaceably and without mischief, were once, perhaps, in appearance more remote from discovery, and seemed less practicable, than we may now suppose it, to give direction to that which is already buoyant; especially possessed as we are of such consummate mechanical skill, already masters of principles which we have nothing to do but apply, of which we have already availed ourselves in the similar case of navigation, and having in every fowl of the air a pattern, which now at length it may be sufficient to imitate. Wings and a tail, indeed, were of little use, while the body, so much heavier than the space of air it occupied, was sure to sink by its own weight, and could never be held in equipoise by any implements of the kind which human strength could manage. But now we float; at random, indeed, pretty much, and as the wind drives us; for want of nothing, however, but that steerage which invention, the conqueror of many equal, if not superior difficulties, may be expected to supply.—Should the point be carried, and man at last become as familiar with the air as he has long been with the ocean, will it in its consequences prove a mercy, or a judgment? I think, a judgment. First, because if a power to convey himself from place to place, like a bird, would have been good for him, his Maker would have formed him with such a capacity. But he

has been a groveller upon the earth for six thousand years, and now at last, when the close of this present state of things approaches, begins to exalt himself above it. So much the worse for *him*. Like a truant school-boy, he breaks his bounds, and will have reason to repent of his presumption.—Secondly, I think it will prove a judgment, because, with the exercise of very little foresight, it is easy to prognosticate a thousand evils which the project must necessarily bring after it; amounting at last to the confusion of all order, the annihilation of all authority, with dangers both to property and person, and impunity to the offenders. Were I an absolute legislator, I would therefore make it death for a man to be convicted of flying, the moment he could be caught; and to bring him down from his altitudes by a bullet sent through his head or his carriage, should be no murder. Philosophers would call me a Vandal; the scholar would say that, had it not been for me, the fable of Dædalus would have been realised; and historians would load my memory with reproaches of phlegm, and stupidity, and oppression; but in the mean time the world would go on quietly, and, if it enjoyed less liberty, would at least be more secure.

I know not what are your sentiments upon the subject of the East India Bill. This, too, has frequently afforded me matter of speculation. I can easily see that it is not without its blemishes; but its beauties, in my eye, are much predominant. Whatever may be its author's views, if he delivers so large a portion of mankind from such horrible tyranny as the East has so long suffered, he deserves a statue much more than Mongolfier, who, it seems, is to receive that honour. Perhaps he may bring our own freedom into jeopardy; but to do this for the sake of emancipating nations so much more numerous than ourselves, is at least generous, and a design that should have my encouragement, if I had any encouragement to afford it.

We are well, and love you. Remember us, as I doubt not you do, with the same affection, and be content with my sentiments upon subjects such as these, till I can send you, if that day should ever come, a letter more worthy of your reception.

Nous sommes les vôtres,

Guillaume et Marie.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 27, 1783.

Thanks to the patriotic junto, whose efforts have staved off the expected dissolution, franks have not yet lost their currency. Ignorant as they were that my writing by this post depended upon the existence of the present parliament, they have conducted their deliberations with a sturdiness and magnanimity that would almost tempt one to suppose that they had known it. So true it is, that the actions of men are connected with consequences they are little aware of; and that events, comparatively trivial in themselves, may give birth to the most important.

My thoughts of ministers and men in power are nearly akin to yours. It is well for the public, when the rulers of a state are actuated by principles that may happen to coincide with its interests. The ambition of an individual has often been made subservient to the general good; and many a man has served his country, merely for the sake of immortalizing himself by doing it. So far, it seems to me, the natural man is to be trusted, and no farther. Self is at the bottom of all his conduct. If self can be pleased, flattered, enriched, exalted by his exertions, and his talents are such as qualify him for great usefulness, his country shall be the better for him. And this, perhaps, is all the patriotism we have a right to look for. In the mean time,

however, I cannot but think such a man in some degree a respectable character, and am willing, at least, to do him honour, so far as I feel myself benefited by him. Ambition and the love of fame are certainly no Christian principles, but they are such as commonly belong to men of superior minds, and the fruits they produce may often plead their apology. The great men of the world are of a piece with the world to which they belong; they are raised up to govern it, and in the government of it are prompted by worldly motives: but it prospers, perhaps, under their management; and when it does, the Christian world, which is totally a distinct creation, partaking of the advantage, has cause to be thankful. The sun is a glorious creature; he does much good, but without intending it. I, however, who am conscious of the good he does, though I know not what religion he is of, or whether he has any or none, rejoice in his effects, admire him, and am sensible that it is every man's duty to be thankful for him. In this sentiment I know you agree with me, for I believe he has not a warmer votary than yourself.

We say, the king can do no wrong; and it is well for poor George the Third that he cannot. In my opinion, however, he has lately been within a hair's-breadth of that predicament. His advisers, indeed, are guilty, and not he: but he will probably find, however hard it may seem, that if he can do no wrong, he may yet suffer the consequences of the wrong he cannot do. He has dismissed his servants, but not disgraced them; they triumph in their degradation, and no man is willing to supply their places. Must their offices remain unoccupied, or must they be courted to resume them? Never was such a distracted state of things within my remembrance; and I much fear that this is but the beginning of sorrows. It is not a time of day for a king to take liberties with the people; there is a spirit in the Commons that will not endure it; and his Majesty's advisers must

be less acquainted with the temper of the times than it is possible to suppose them, if they imagine that such strides of prerogative will not be resented. The address will gall him. I am sorry that he has exposed himself to such a reprehension, but I think it warranted by the occasion. I pity him; but king as he is, and much as I have always honoured him, had I been a member I should have voted for it.

I am obliged to Mr. Bacon for thinking of me. That expression, however, does not do justice to my feelings. Even with the little knowledge I have of him, I should love him, had I no reason to suppose myself at any time an object of his attention; but knowing that I am so happy as to have a share in his remembrance, I certainly love him the more. Truly I am not in his debt: I cannot say wherefore it is so, but certainly few days pass in which I do not remember *him*. The print, indeed, with which he favoured me, and which is always in my view, must often suggest the recollection of him; but though I greatly value it, I do not believe it is my only prompter.

I finish with what I wish may make you laugh, as it did me. Mr. Scott, exhorting the people to frequent prayer, closed his address thus:—"You have nothing to do but to ask, and you will ever find Him ready to bestow. Open your wide mouths, and he will fill them."

Mrs. Unwin is well. Accept an old but a true conclusion—our united love to you and yours, and believe me, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

DEAR MADAM,

Jan. 5, 1784.

You will readily pardon the trouble I give you by this line, when I plead my attention to your husband's convenience in my excuse. I know him to be so busy a man, that I cannot in conscience trouble him with a commission, which I know it is impossible he should have leisure to execute. After all, the labour would devolve upon you, and therefore I may as well address you in the first instance.

I have read, and return the books you were so kind as to procure for me. Mr. Hill gave me hopes, in his last, that from the library, to which I have subscribed, I might still be supplied with more. I have not many more to wish for, nor do I mean to make any unreasonable use of your kindness. In about a fortnight I shall be favoured, by a friend in Essex, with as many as will serve me during the rest of the winter. In summer I read but little. In the mean time, I shall be much obliged to you for Forster's Narrative of the same Voyage, if your librarian has it; and likewise, for Swinburn's Travels, which Mr. Hill mentioned. If they can be sent at once, which perhaps the terms of subscription may not allow, I shall be glad to receive them so. If not, then Forster's first, and Swinburn afterwards: and Swinburn, at any rate, if Forster is not to be procured.

Reading over what I have written, I find it perfectly free and easy; so much indeed in that style; that, had I not had repeated proofs of your good-nature in other instances, I should have modesty enough to suppress it, and attempt something more civil, and becoming a person who has never had the happiness of seeing you. But I have always observed, that sensible people are best pleased with what is natural and unaffected. Nor can I tell

you a plainer truth, than that I am, without the least dissimulation, and with a warm remembrance of past favours,

My dear Madam,
Your affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

I beg to be remembered to Mr. Hill.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 8, 1784.

I wish you had more leisure, that you might oftener favour me with a page of politics. The authority of a newspaper is not of sufficient weight to determine my opinions, and I have no other documents to be set down by. I, therefore, on this subject, am suspended in a state of constant scepticism, the most uneasy condition in which the judgment can find itself. But *your* politics have weight with me, because I know your independent spirit, the justness of your reasonings, and the opportunities you have of information. But I know likewise the urgency and the multiplicity of your concerns; and, therefore, like a neglected clock, must be contented to go wrong, except when, perhaps twice in the year, you shall come to set me right.

Public credit is indeed shaken, and the funds at a low ebb. How can they be otherwise, when our western wing is already clipt to the stumps, and the shears, at this moment, threaten our eastern. Low, however, as our public stock is, it is not lower than my private one; and this being the article that touches me most nearly, at present, I shall be obliged to you, if you will have recourse to such ways and means for the replenishment of my exchequer, as your wisdom may suggest,

and your best ability suffice to execute. The experience I have had of your readiness upon all similar occasions, has been very agreeable to me; and I doubt not but upon the present I shall find you equally prompt to serve me. So,

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 13, 1784.

The new year is already old in my account. I am not, indeed, sufficiently second-sighted to be able to boast by anticipation an acquaintance with the events of it yet unborn, but rest convinced that, be they what they may, not one of them comes a messenger of good to me. If even death itself should be of the number, he is no friend of mine. It is an alleviation of the woes even of an unenlightened man, that he can wish for death, and indulge a hope, at least, that in death he shall find deliverance. But, loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a supposed probability of better things to come, were it once ended. For, more unhappy than the traveller with whom I set out,* pass through what difficulties I may, through whatever dangers and afflictions, I am not a whit the nearer home, unless a dungeon may be called so. This is no very agreeable theme, but in so great a dearth of subjects to write upon, and especially impressed as I am at this moment with a sense of my own condition, I could choose no other. The weather is an exact emblem of my mind in its present state. A thick fog envelopes every thing, and at

* For the passage here alluded to, see the letter published by Mr. Hayley, under the date of Jan. 18, 1784.

the same time it freezes intensely. You will tell me that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavour to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it;—but it will be lost labour. Nature revives again; but a soul once slain lives no more. The hedge that has been apparently dead, is not so; it will burst into leaf and blossom at the appointed time; but no such time is appointed for the stake that stands in it. It is as dead as it seems, and will prove itself no dissembler. The latter end of next month will complete a period of eleven years in which I have spoken no other language. It is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness; long enough to make despair an inveterate habit, and such it is in me. My friends, I know, expect that I shall see yet again. They think it necessary to the existence of divine truth; that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the solidity of this reasoning in every case but my own. And why not in my own? For causes which to them it appears madness to allege, but which rest upon my mind with a weight of immoveable conviction. If I am recoverable, why am I thus? why crippled and made useless in the church, just at that time of life, when, my judgment and experience being matured, I might be most useful. Why cashiered and turned out of service, till, according to the course of nature, there is not life enough left in me to make amends for the years I have lost; till there is no reasonable hope left that the fruit can ever pay the expense of the fallow? I forestal the answer:—God's ways are mysterious, and he giveth no account of his matters:—an answer that would serve my purpose as well as theirs that use it. There is a mystery in my destruction, and in time it shall be explained.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 22, 1784.

I owe you thanks for your kind remembrance of me in your letter sent me on occasion of your departure, and as many for that which I received last night. I should have answered, had I known where a line or two from me might find you; but, uncertain whether you were at home or abroad, my diligence, I confess, wanted the necessary spur.

It makes a capital figure among the comforts we enjoyed during the long severity of the season, that the same *incognito* to all except ourselves, made us his almoners this year likewise, as he did the last, and to the same amount. Some we have been enabled, I suppose, to save from perishing, and certainly many from the most pinching necessity.

Are you not afraid, Tory as you are, to avow your principles to me, who am a Whig? Know that I am in the opposition; that though I pity the King, I do not wish him success in the present contest. But this is too long a battle to fight upon paper. Make haste that we may decide it face to face.

Our respects wait upon Mrs. Bull, and our love upon the young Hebræan. I wish you joy of his proficiency, and am glad that you can say, with the old man in Terence,

Omnes continuò laudare fortunas meas,
Qui natum habeam tali ingenio præditum.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 19, 1784.

I converse, you say, upon other subjects than that of despair, and may therefore write upon others. Indeed, my friend, I am a man of very little conversation upon any subject. From that of despair I abstain as much as possible, for the sake of my company; but I will venture to say that it is never out of my mind one minute in the whole day. I do not mean to say that I am never cheerful. I am often so: always, indeed, when my nights have been undisturbed for a season. But the effect of such continual listening to the language of a heart hopeless and deserted, is, that I can never give much more than half my attention to what is started by others, and very rarely start any thing myself. My silence, however, and my absence of mind, make me sometimes as entertaining as if I had wit. They furnish an occasion for friendly and good-natured raillery; they raise a laugh, and I partake of it. But you will easily perceive that a mind thus occupied is but indifferently qualified for the consideration of theological matters. The most useful and the most delightful topics of that kind are to me forbidden fruit;—I tremble if I approach them. It has happened to me sometimes that I have found myself imperceptibly drawn in, and made a party in such discourse. The consequence has been, dissatisfaction and self-reproach. You will tell me, perhaps, that I have written upon these subjects in verse, and may, therefore, if I please, in prose. But there is a difference. The search after poetical expression, the rhyme, and the numbers, are all affairs of some difficulty; they amuse, indeed, but are not to be attained without study, and engross, perhaps, a larger share of the attention than the subject itself. Persons fond of music will sometimes

find pleasure in the tune, when the words afford them none. There are, however, subjects that do not always terrify me by their importance; such, I mean, as relate to Christian life and manners; and when such an one presents itself, and finds me in a frame of mind that does not absolutely forbid the employment, I shall most readily give it my attention, for the sake, however, of your request merely. Verse is my favourite occupation, and what I compose in that way, I reserve for my own use hereafter.

I have lately finished eight volumes of Johnson's Prefaces, or Lives of the Poets. In all that number I observe but one man—a poet of no great fame—of whom I did not know that he existed till I found him there, whose mind seems to have had the slightest tincture of religion; and he was hardly in his senses. His name was Collins. He sunk into a state of melancholy, and died young. Not long before his death, he was found at his lodgings in Islington by his biographer, with the New Testament in his hand. He said to Johnson, "I have but one book, but it is the best." Of him, therefore, there are some hopes. But from the lives of all the rest there is but one inference to be drawn: that poets are a very worthless, wicked set of people.

Yours, my dear friend, truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

March 21, 1784.

I thank you for the entertainment you have afforded me. I often wish for a library, often regret my folly in selling a good collection, but I have one in Essex. It is rather remote, indeed, too distant for occasional reference; but it serves the purpose of

amusement, and a waggon being a very suitable vehicle for an author. I find myself commodiously supplied. Last night I made an ead of reading Johnson's Prefaces; but the number of poets whom he has vouchsafed to chronicle, being fifty-six, there must be many with whose history I am not yet acquainted. These, or some of these, if it suits you to give them a part of your chaise, when you come, will be heartily welcome. I am very much the biographer's humble admirer. His uncommon share of good sense, and his forcible expression, secure to him that tribute from all his readers. He has a penetrating insight into character, and a happy talent of correcting the popular opinion, upon all occasions where it is erroneous; and this he does with the boldness of a man who will think for himself, but, at the same time, with a justness of sentiment that convinces us he does not differ from others through affectation, but because he has a sounder judgment. This remark, however, has his narrative for its object, rather than his critical performance. In the latter, I do not think him always just, when he departs from the general opinion. He finds no beauties in Milton's *Lycidas*. He pours contempt upon Prior, to such a degree, that were he really as undeserving of notice as he represents him, he ought no longer to be numbered among the poets. These, indeed, are the two capital instances in which he has offended me. There are others less important, which I have not room to enumerate, and in which I am less confident that he is wrong. What suggested to him the thought that the *Alma* was written in imitation of *Hudibras*, I cannot conceive. In former years, they were both favourites of mine, and I often read them; but never saw in them the least resemblance to each other; nor do I now, except that they are composed in verse of the same measure. After all, it is a melancholy observation, which it is impossible not to make, after having run

through this series of poetical lives, that where there were such shining talents, there should be, so little virtue.

These luminaries of our country seem to have been kindled into a brighter blaze than others, only that their spots might be more noticed ! So much can nature do for our intellectual part, and so little for our moral. What vanity, what petulance in Pope ! How painfully sensible of censure, and yet how restless in provocation ! To what mean artifices could Addison stoop, in hopes of injuring the reputation of his friend ! Savage, how sordidly vicious, and the more condemned for the pains that are taken to palliate his vices. Offensive as they appear through a veil, how would they disgust without one. What a sycophant to the public taste was Dryden ; sinning against his feelings, lewd in his writings, though chaste in his conversation. I know not but one might search these eight volumes with a candle, as the prophet says, to find a man, and not find one, unless, perhaps, Arbuthnot were he. I shall begin Beattie this evening, and propose to myself much satisfaction in reading him. In him, at least, I shall find a man whose faculties have now and then a glimpse from Heaven upon them ;—a man, not indeed in possession of much evangelical light, but faithful to what he has, and never neglecting an opportunity to use it ! How much more respectable such a character, than that of thousands who would call him blind, and yet have not the grace to practise half his virtues ! He, too, is a poet, and wrote the Minstrel. The specimens which I have seen of it pleased me much. If you have the whole, I should be glad to read it. I may, perhaps, since you allow me the liberty, indulge myself here and there, with a marginal annotation, but shall not use that allowance wantonly, so as to deface the volumes.

Yours, my dear William,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

April 25, 1784.

Thanks for the fish, with its companion, a lobster, which we mean to eat to-morrow.

*To the immortal memory of the Halybutt, on which I
dined this day,*

Monday, April 26, 1784.

Where hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? when wast thou an egg new-spawn'd,
Lost in th' immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
Above the brine—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulph,

To the same drag that caught thee !—Fare thee well !
 Thy lot, thy brethren of the slimy fin
 Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
 To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 10, 1784.

We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof of the omnipotence of Grace; and the more singular the more decided. The world will set his age against his wisdom, and comfort itself with the thought that he must be superannuated. Perhaps, therefore, in order to refute the slander, and do honour to the cause to which he becomes a convert, he could not do better than devote his great abilities, and a considerable part of the remainder of his years, to the production of some important work, not immediately connected with the interests of religion. He would thus give proof, that a man of profound learning, and the best sense, may become a child without being a fool; and that to embrace the gospel, is no evidence either of enthusiasm, infirmity, or insanity. But He who calls him will direct him.

On Friday, by particular invitation, we attended an attempt to throw off a balloon at Mr. Throckmorton's, but it did not succeed. We expect, however, to be summoned again in the course of the ensuing week. Mrs. Unwin and I were the party. We were entertained with the utmost politeness. It is not possible to conceive a more engaging and agreeable character than the Gentleman's, or a more consummate assemblage of all that is called good-nature, complaisance, and innocent cheerfulness,

than is to be seen in the Lady. They have lately received many gross affronts from the people of this place, on account of their religion. We thought it, therefore, the more necessary to treat them with respect.

Best love, and best wishes,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 21, 1784.

We are much pleased with your designed improvement of the late preposterous celebrity, and have no doubt that, in good hands, the foolish occasion will turn to good account. A religious service, instituted in honour of a musician, and performed in the house of God, is a subject that calls loudly for the animadversion of an enlightened minister; and would be no mean one for a satirist, could a poet of that description be found spiritual enough to feel and to resent the profanation. It is reasonable to suppose, that in the next year's almanack we shall find the name of Handel among the red-lettered worthies, for it would surely puzzle the Pope to add any thing to its canonization.

This unpleasant summer makes me wish for winter. The gloominess of that season is the less felt, both because it is expected, and because the days are short. But such weather, when the days are longest, makes a double winter, and my spirits feel that it does. We have now frosty mornings, and so cold a wind, that even at high noon we have been obliged to break off our walk in the southern side of the garden, and seek shelter, I in the green-house, and Mrs. Unwin by the fire-side.

Haymaking begins here to-morrow, and would have begun sooner, had the weather permitted it.

Mr. Wright called upon us last Sunday. The old gentleman seems happy in being exempted from the effects of time, to such a degree, that, though we meet but once in the year, I cannot perceive that the twelve months that have elapsed have made any change in him. It seems, however, that as much as he loves his master, and as easy as I suppose he has always found his service, he now and then heaves a sigh for liberty, and wishes to taste it before he dies. But his wife is not so minded. She cannot leave a family, the sons and daughters of which seem to be all her own. Her brother died lately in the East Indies, leaving twenty thousand pounds behind him, and half of it to her; but the ship that was bringing home this treasure, is supposed to be lost. Her husband appears perfectly unaffected by the misfortune, and she, perhaps, may even be glad of it. Such an acquisition would have forced her into a state of independence, and have made her her own mistress, whether she would not. I charged him with a petition to Lord Dartmouth, to send me Cook's last Voyage, which I have a great curiosity to see, and no other means of procuring. I dare say I shall obtain the favour, and have great pleasure in taking my last trip with a voyager whose memory I respect so much. Farewell, my dear friend: our affectionate remembrances are faithful to you and yours.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 3, [probably 1784.]

I ask pardon for neglecting a subject on which you consulted me in your last. It is too much my practice to reply to a letter without reading it at the time ; and, on this occasion, my memory failed me. I am no friend to Lilly's Grammar, though I was indebted to him for my first introduction to the Latin language. The grammars used at Westminster, both for the Latin and the Greek, are those to which, if I had a young man to educate, I should give the preference. They have the merit of being compendious and perspicuous, in both which properties I judge Lilly to be defective. If I am not mistaken, however, they are in use at the Charter-house, so that I have no need to describe them to *you*. They are called Busby's Grammars, though Busby did not compose them. The compilation was a task imposed upon his uppermost boys, the plan only being drawn by the master, and the versification, which I have often admired for the ingenuity of it, being theirs. I never knew a boy of any abilities, who had taken his notion of language from these grammars, that was not accurate to a degree that distinguished him from most others.

I am writing in the green-house for retirement sake, where I shiver with cold on this present third of July. Summer and winter, therefore, do not depend on the position of the sun with respect to the earth, but on *His* appointment who is sovereign in all things. Last Saturday night the cold was so severe, that it pinched off many of the young shoots of our peach-trees. The nurseryman we deal with informs me, that the wall-trees are almost every where cut off ; and that a friend of his, near London, has lost all the full-grown fruit-trees of an extensive

garden. The very walnuts, which are now no bigger than small hazel-nuts, drop to the ground ; and the flowers, though they blow, seem to have lost all their odours. I walked with your mother yesterday in the garden, wrapped up in a winter surtout, and found myself not at all incumberd by it ; not more, indeed, than I was in January. Cucumbers contract that spot which is seldom found upon them except late in the autumn ; and melons hardly grow. It is a comfort, however, to reflect, that if we cannot have these fruits in perfection, neither do we want them. Our crops of wheat are said to be very indifferent ; the stalks of an unequal height, so that some of the ears are in danger of being smothered by the rest ; and the ears, in general, lean and scanty. I never knew a summer in which we had not now and then a cold day to conflict with ; but such a wintry fortnight as the last, at this season of the year, I never remember. I fear you have made a discovery of the webs you mention a day too late. The vermin have probably by this time left them, and may laugh at all human attempts to destroy them. For every web they have hung upon the trees and bushes this year, you will next year probably find fifty, perhaps an hundred. Their increase is almost infinite ; so that, if Providence does not interfere, and man see fit to neglect them, the laughers you mention may live to be sensible of their mistake.

Love to all.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 19, 1784.

Notwithstanding the justness of the comparison by which you illustrate the folly and wickedness of a congregation assembled to pay divine honours to the memory of Handel, I could not help laughing at the picture you have drawn of the musical convicts. The subject indeed is awful, and your manner of representing it is perfectly just; yet I laughed, and must have laughed had I been one of your hearers. But the ridicule lies in the preposterous conduct which you reprove, and not in your reproof of it. A people so musically mad as to make not only their future trial the subject of a concert, but even the message of mercy from their King, and the only one he will ever send them, must excuse me if I am merry where there is more cause to be sad; for melancholy as their condition is, their behaviour under it is too ludicrous not to be felt as such, and would conquer even a more settled gravity than mine.*

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 30, 1784.

I am now reading a book which you have never read, and will probably never read—Knox's Essays. Perhaps I should premise, that I am driven to such reading by the want of books that would please me better, neither having any, nor

* What Mr. Hayley has introduced under the date of this letter immediately follows, and is strikingly illustrative of the foregoing observations.

the means of procuring any. I am not sorry, however, that I have met with him; though when I have allowed him the praise of being a sensible man, and in *his* way a good one, I have allowed him all that I can afford. Neither his style pleases me, which is sometimes insufferably dry and hard, and sometimes ornamented even to an Harveian tawdriness; nor his manner, which is never lively without being the worse for it: so unhappy is he in his attempts at character and narration. But writing chiefly on the manners, vices, and follies of the modern day, to me he is at least so far useful, as that he gives me information upon points concerning which I neither *can* nor *would* be informed except by hearsay. Of such information, however, I have need, being a writer upon those subjects myself, and a satirical writer too. It is fit, therefore, in order that I may find fault in the right place, that I should know where fault may properly be found.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 4, 1784.

You have my hearty thanks for a very good barrel of oysters; which necessary acknowledgment once made, I might perhaps show more kindness by cutting short an epistle, than by continuing one, in which you are not likely to find your account, either in the way of information or amusement. The season of the year, indeed, is not very friendly to such communications. A damp atmosphere and a sunless sky will have their effect upon the spirits; and when the spirits are checked, farewell to all hope of being good company, either by letter or otherwise. I envy those happy voyagers, who, with so much

ease, ascend to regions unsullied with a cloud, and date their epistles from an extra-mundane situation. No wonder if they outshine us who poke about in the dark below, in the vivacity of their sallies, as much as they soar above us in their excursions. Not but that I should be very sorry to go to the clouds for wit: on the contrary, I am satisfied that I discover more by continuing where I am. Every man to his business. Their vocation is, to see fine prospects, and to make pithy observations upon the world below; such as these, for instance: that the earth, beheld from a height that one trembles to think of, has the appearance of a circular plain; that England is a very rich and cultivated country, in which every man's property is ascertained by the hedges that intersect the lands; and that London and Westminster, seen from the neighbourhood of the moon, make but an insignificant figure. I admit the utility of these remarks; but, in the mean time, as I say, *chacun à son gout*; and mine is rather to creep than fly; and to carry with me, if possible, an unbroken neck to the grave.

I remain, as ever,

Your affectionate,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Jan. 5, 1785.

* * * * *

I have observed, and you must have had occasion to observe it oftener than I, that when a man, who once seemed to be a Christian, has put off that character, and resumed his old one, he loses, together with the grace which he seemed to possess, the most amiable part of the character that he resumes. The

best features of his natural face seem to be struck out, that, after having worn religion only as a handsome mask, he may make a more disgusting appearance than he did before he assumed it.

According to your request, I subjoin my Epitaph on Dr. Johnson; at least I mean to do it, if a drum, which at this moment announces the arrival of a giant in the town, will give me leave. I have not yet sent the copy to the Magazine.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

Here Johnson lies—a sage, by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last—alone worth all the rest.
Oh man immortal by a double prize,
On earth by fame, by favour in the skies!*

Mr. ——— has quitted the country, having neither left admirers behind him, nor taken any with him; unless perhaps his wife be one, which admits some doubt. He quarrelled with most of his acquaintance, and the rest grew sick of him. He even quarrelled with his auctioneer in the midst of the sale of his goods, and would not permit him to proceed, finishing that matter himself.

Yours,

W. C.

* By referring to the 8vo edition of Hayley's Life of Cowper, vol. ii. p. 275. the reader will perceive that the conclusion of the Epitaph was afterwards varied.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 22, 1785.

The departure of the long frost, by which we were pinched and squeezed together for three weeks, is a most agreeable circumstance. The weather is now (to speak poetically) genial and jocund; and the appearance of the sun, after so tedious an eclipse, peculiarly welcome. For were it not that I have a gravel-walk about sixty yards long, where I take my daily exercise, I should be obliged to look at a fine day through the window, without any other enjoyment of it;—a country rendered impassable by frost, that has been at last resolved into rottenness, keeps me so close a prisoner. Long live the inventors and improvers of balloons! It is always clear over-head, and by and by we shall use no other road.

How will the Parliament employ themselves when they meet?—to any purpose, or to none, or only to a bad one? They are utterly out of my favour. I despair of them altogether. Will they pass an act for the cultivation of the royal wildernesses? Will they make effectual provision for a northern fishery? Will they establish a new sinking-fund, that shall infallibly pay off the national debt? I say nothing about a more equal representation, because, unless they bestow upon private gentlemen of no property a privilege of voting, I stand no chance of ever being represented myself. Will they achieve all these wonders, or none of them? And shall I derive no other advantage from the great Wittena-Gemot of the nation, than merely to read their debates, for twenty folios of which I would not give one farthing?

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Olney, Feb. 19, 1785.

I am obliged to you for apprising me of the various occasions of delay to which your letters are liable. Furnished with such a key, I shall be able to account for any accidental tardiness, without supposing any thing worse than that you yourself have been interrupted, or that your messenger has not been punctual.

Mr. Teeden has just left us. He came to exhibit to us a specimen of his kinsman's skill in the art of book-binding. The book on which he had exercised his ingenuity was your *Life*. You did not, indeed, make a very splendid appearance; but, considering that you were dressed by an untaught artificer, and that it was his first attempt, you had no cause to be dissatisfied. The young man has evidently the possession of talents, by which he might shine both for the benefit of others and for his own, did not his situation smother him. He can make a dulcimer, tune it, play upon it, and with common advantages would undoubtedly have been able to make an harpsichord. But, unfortunately he lives where neither the one nor the other are at all in vogue. He can convert the shell of a cocoa-nut into a decent drinking-cup; but when he has done, he must either fill it at the pump, or use it merely as an ornament of his own mantle-tree. In like manner, he can bind a book; but if he would have books to bind, he must either make them or buy them, for we have few or no literati at Olney. Some men have talents with which they do mischief; and others have talents with which, if they do no mischief to others, at least they can do but little good to themselves. They are, however, always a blessing, unless by our own folly we make them

a curse; for if we cannot turn them to a lucrative account, they may however furnish us, at many a dull season, with the means of innocent amusement. Such is the use that Mr. Killingworth makes of his; and this evening we have, I think, made him happy, having furnished him with two octavo volumes, in which the principles and practice of all ingenious arts are inculcated and explained. I make little doubt that, by the half of it, he will in time be able to perform many feats, for which he will never be one farthing the richer, but by which, nevertheless, himself and his kin will be much diverted.

How much better is he employed than a neighbour of ours has been for many years, whose sole occupation, although he too is naturally ingenious, has centred in filling his glass and emptying it. He is neither unknown nor much known to you, but you remember him by the name of ————. He is now languishing in a dropsy, and, in the prime of life, labouring under all the infirmities of age. He solaces himself, I am told, with the recollection of somewhat that passed in his experience many years ago, which, although it has been followed by no better fruits than will grow at an alehouse, he dignifies with the name of Conversion. Sows are so converted when they are washed, and give the same evidence of an unchanged nature by returning to the mire. Mr. ———, whose daughter he married, often visits him, but declares, that of all the insensibles he ever saw, poor ——— is the most completely stupid. So long as he was able to crawl into the street, his journey was to the Royal Oak and home again; and so punctual were we both, I in cleaning my teeth at my window, and he in drinking his dram at the same time, that I seldom failed to observe him. But both his legs are now blistered, and refuse to assist him in poisoning himself any longer.

The winter returning upon us at this late season with redou-

bled severity, is an event unpleasant even to us who are well furnished with fuel, and seldom feel much of it, unless when we step into bed or get out of it ; but how much more formidable to the poor ! When ministers talk of resources, that word never fails to send my imagination into the mud-wall cottages of our poor at Olney. There I find assembled, in one individual, the miseries of age, sickness, and the extremest penury. We have many such instances around us. The parish, perhaps, allows such an one a shilling a week ; but, being numbed with cold, and crippled by disease, she cannot possibly earn herself another. Such persons, therefore, suffer all that famine can inflict upon them, only that they are not actually starved ; a catastrophe which, to many of them, I suppose, would prove a happy release. One cause of all this misery is, the exorbitant taxation with which the country is encumbered ; so that, to the poor, the few pence they are able to procure have almost lost their value. Yet the budget will be opened soon, and soon we shall hear of resources. But I could conduct the statesman, who rolls down to the House in a chariot as splendid as that of Phaeton, into scenes that, if he had any sensibility for the woes of others, would make him tremble at the mention of the word.—This, however, is not what I intended when I began this paragraph. I was going to observe, that of all the winters we have passed at Olney, and this is the seventeenth, the present has confined us most. Thrice, and but thrice, since the middle of October, have we escaped into the fields for a little fresh air, and a little change of motion. The last time, indeed, it was at some peril that we did it, Mrs. Unwin having slipped into a ditch, and, though I performed the part of an active squire upon the occasion, escaped out of it upon her hands and knees.

If the town afford any other news than I here send you, it

has not reached me yet. I am in perfect health, at least of body, and Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well. Adieu! We remember you always, you and yours, with as much affection as you can desire; which being said, and said truly, leaves me quite at a loss for any other conclusion than that of

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 27, 1785.

I write merely to inquire after your health, and with a sincere desire to hear that you are better. Horace somewhere advises his friend to give his client the slip, and come and spend the evening with him. I am not so inconsiderate as to recommend the same measure to you, because we are not such very near neighbours as a trip of that sort requires that we should be. But I do verily wish that you would favour me with just five minutes of the time that properly belongs to your clients, and place it to my account. Employ it, I mean, in telling me that you are better at least, if not recovered.

I have been pretty much indisposed myself since I wrote last; but, except in point of strength, am now as well as before. My disorder was what is commonly called and best understood by the name of a thorough cold; which, being interpreted, no doubt you will know, signifies shiverings, aches, burnings, lassitude, together with many other ills that flesh is heir to. James's Powder is my nostrum on all such occasions, and never fails.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 19, 1785.

You will wonder, no doubt, when I tell you that I write upon a card-table ; and will be still more surprised when I add, that we breakfast, dine, sup, upon a card-table. In short, it serves all purposes, except the only one for which it was originally designed. The solution of this mystery shall follow, lest it should run in your head at a wrong time, and should puzzle you, perhaps, when you are on the point of ascending your pulpit : for I have heard you say, that at such seasons your mind is often troubled with impertinent intrusions. The round table, which we formerly had in use, was unequal to the pressure of my super-incumbent breast and elbows. When I wrote upon it, it creaked and tilted, and, by a variety of inconvenient tricks, disturbed the process. The fly-table was too slight and too small ; the square dining-table, too heavy and too large, occupying, when its leaves were spread, almost the whole parlour ; and the sideboard-table, having its station at too great a distance from the fire, and not being easily shifted out of its place and into it again, by reason of its size, was equally unfit for my purpose. The card-table, therefore, which had for sixteen years been banished as mere lumber ; the card-table, which is covered with green baize, and is, therefore, preferable to any other that has a slippery surface ; the card-table, that stands firm and never totters,—is advanced to the honour of assisting me upon my scribbling occasions ; and, because we choose to avoid the trouble of making frequent changes in the position of our household furniture, proves equally serviceable upon all others. It has cost us now and then the downfall of a glass : for, when covered with a table-cloth, the fish-ponds are

not easily discerned ; and not being seen, are sometimes as little thought of. But having numerous good qualities which abundantly compensate that single inconvenience, we spill upon it our coffee, our wine, and our ale, without murmuring, and resolve that it shall be our table still, to the exclusion of all others. Not to be tedious, I will add but one more circumstance upon the subject, and that only because it will impress upon you, as much as any thing that I have said, a sense of the value we set upon its escritorio capacity.—Parched and penetrated on one side by the heat of the fire, it has opened into a large fissure, which pervades not the moulding of it only, but the very substance of the plank. At the mouth of this aperture, a sharp splinter presents itself, which, as sure as it comes in contact with a gown or an apron, tears it. It happens, unfortunately, to be on that side of this excellent and never-to-be-forgotten table which Mrs. Unwin sweeps with her apparel, almost as often as she rises from her chair. The consequences need not, to use the fashionable phrase, be given in detail : but the needle sets all to rights ; and the card-table still holds possession of its functions without a rival.

Clean roads and milder weather have once more released us, opening a way for our escape into our accustomed walks. We have both, I believe, been sufferers by such a long confinement. Mrs. Unwin has had a nervous fever all the winter, and I a stomach that has quarrelled with every thing, and not seldom even with its bread and butter. Her complaint, I hope, is at length removed ; but mine seems more obstinate, giving way to nothing that I can oppose to it, except just in the moment when the opposition is made. I ascribe this malady—both our maladies, indeed—in a great measure, to our want of exercise. We have each of us practised more, in other days, than lately we have been able to take ; and for my own part, till I was more

than thirty years old, it was almost essential to my comfort to be perpetually in motion. My constitution, therefore, misses, I doubt not, its usual aids of this kind; and unless, for purposes which I cannot foresee, Providence should interpose to prevent it, will probably reach the moment of its dissolution the sooner for being so little disturbed. A vitiated digestion, I believe, always terminates, if not cured, in the production of some chronic disorder. In several I have known it produce a dropsy. But no matter. Death is inevitable; and whether we die to-day or to-morrow, a watery death or a dry one, is of no consequence. The state of our spiritual health is all. Could I discover a few more symptoms of convalescence there, this body might moulder into its original dust without one sigh from me. Nothing of all this did I mean to say; but I have said it, and must now seek another subject.

One of our most favourite walks is spoiled. The spinney is cut down to the stumps: even the lilacs and the syringas, to the stumps. Little did I think, (though indeed I might have thought it,) that the trees which screened me from the sun last summer would this winter be employed in roasting potatoes and boiling tea-kettles for the poor of Olney. But so it has proved; and we ourselves have, at this moment, more than two waggon-loads of them in our wood-loft.

Such various services can trees perform;

Whom once they skreen'd from heat, in time they warm.

The mention of the poor reminds me of saying, in answer to your application in behalf of the F——'s, that they long since received a portion of their nameless benefactor's annual remittance. Mrs. Unwin sent them more than twelve pounds of beef, and two gallon loaves.

A letter from Manchester reached our town last Sunday, ad-

dressed to the Mayor or other chief magistrate of Olney. The purport of it was, to excite him and his neighbours to petition Parliament against the concessions to Ireland that Government has in contemplation. Mr. Maurice Smith, as constable, took the letter. But whether that most respectable personage amongst us intends to comply with the terms of it, or not, I am ignorant. For myself, however, I can pretty well answer, that I shall sign no petition of the sort; both because I do not think myself competent to a right understanding of the question, and because it appears to me, that, whatever be the event, no place in England can be less concerned in it than Olney.

We rejoice that you are all well. Our love attends Mrs. Newton and yourself, and the young ladies.

I am yours, my dear friend, as usual,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 9, 1785.

In a letter to the printer of the Northampton Mercury, we have the following history.—An ecclesiastic of the name of Zichen, German superintendant or Lutheran bishop of Zetterfeldt, in the year 1779 delivered to the courts of Hanover and Brunswick a prediction to the following purport. That an earthquake is at hand, the greatest and most destructive ever known; that it will originate in the Alps and in their neighbourhood, especially at Mount St. Gothard; at the foot of which mountain, it seems, four rivers have their source, of which the Rhine is one. The names of the rest I have forgotten. They are all to be swallowed up. That the earth will open into an immense fissure, which will divide all Europe, reaching from

the aforesaid mountain to the states of Holland; that the Zuyder Sea will be absorbed in the gulf; that the Bristol Channel will be no more: in short, that the North of Europe will be separated from the South, and that seven thousand cities, towns, and villages will be destroyed. This prediction he delivered at the aforesaid Courts, in the year seventy-nine, asserting, that in February following the commotion would begin, and that by Easter 1786, the whole would be accomplished. Accordingly, between the fifteenth and twenty-seventh of February, in the year eighty, the public gazettes and newspapers took notice of several earthquakes in the Alps, and in the regions at their foot; particularly about Mount St. Gothard. From this partial fulfilment, Mr. O—— argues the probability of a complete one, and exhorts the world to watch and be prepared. He adds, moreover, that Mr. Zichen was a pious man, a man of science, and a man of sense; and that when he gave in his writing, he offered to swear to it—I suppose, as a revelation from above. He is since dead.

Nothing in the whole affair pleases me so much, as that he has named a short day for the completion of his prophecy. It is tedious work to hold the judgment in suspense for many years; but any body, methinks, may wait with patience till a twelve-month shall pass away, especially when an earthquake of such magnitude is in question. I do not say that Mr. Zichen is deceived; but if he be not, I will say that he is the first modern prophet who has not both been a subject of deception himself, and a deceiver of others. A year will show.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her letter. We hope that Patty has been falsely accused. But, however that may be, we see great cause to admire either the cogency of her arguments, or her husband's openness to conviction, who, by a single box on the ear, was so effectually assured of the innocence

of his wife, as to become more attached to her than ever. For the sake of good husbands, it is to be hoped that she will keep her nostrum a secret, or communicate it only to ladies in her own predicament, who have need of the most forcible proofs of their integrity.

Our love attends all your family. Believe me, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 22, 1785.

When I received your account of the great celebrity of John Gilpin, I felt myself both flattered and grieved. Being man, and having in my composition all the ingredients of which other men are made, and vanity among the rest, it pleased me to reflect that I was on a sudden become so famous, and that all the world was busy enquiring after me: but the next moment, recollecting my former self, and that thirteen years ago, as harmless as John's history is, I should not then have written it, my spirits sank, and I was ashamed of my success. Your letter was followed the next post by one from Mr. Unwin. You tell me that I am rivalled by Mrs. Bellamy; and he, that I have a competitor for fame, not less formidable, in the Learned Pig. Alas! what is an author's popularity worth, in a world that can suffer a prostitute on one side, and a pig on the other, to eclipse his brightest glories? I am therefore sufficiently humbled by these considerations; and unless I should hereafter be ordained to engross the public attention by means more magnificent than a song, am persuaded that I shall suffer no real detriment by their applause. I have produced many things, under the influence of

despair, which hope would not have permitted to spring. But if the soil of that melancholy, in which I have walked so long, has thrown up here and there an unprofitable fungus, it is well, at least, that it is not chargeable with having brought forth poison. Like you, I see, or think I can see, that Gilpin may have his use. Causes, in appearance trivial, produce often the most beneficial consequences; and perhaps my volumes may now travel to a distance, which, if they had not been ushered into the world by that notable horseman, they would never have reached. Our temper differs somewhat from that of the ancient Jews. They would neither dance nor weep. We indeed, weep not, if a man mourn unto us; but I must needs say, that, if he pipe, we seem disposed to dance with the greatest alacrity.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May, 1785.

I do not know that I shall send you news; but, whether it be news or not, it is necessary that I should relate the fact, lest I should omit an article of intelligence important at least at Olney. The event took place much nearer to you than to us, and yet it is possible that no account of it may yet have reached you.—Mr. Ashburner, the elder, went to London on Tuesday se'nnight in perfect health and in high spirits, so as to be remarkably cheerful; and was brought home in an hearse the Friday following. Soon after his arrival in town, he complained of an acute pain in his elbow, then in his shoulder, then in both shoulders; was blooded; took two doses of such medicine as an

apothecary thought might do him good ; and died on Thursday, in the morning, at ten o'clock. When I first heard the tidings, I could hardly credit them ; and yet have lived long enough myself to have seen manifold and most convincing proofs, that neither health, great strength, nor even youth itself, afford the least security from the stroke of death. It is not common, however, for men at the age of thirty-six to die so suddenly. I saw him but a few days before, with a bundle of gloves and hatbands under his arm, at the door of Geary Ball, who lay at that time a corpse. The following day, I saw him march before the coffin, and lead the procession that followed Geary to the grave. He might be truly said to march, for his step was heroic, his figure athletic, and his countenance as firm and confident as if he had been born only to bury others, and was sure never to be buried himself. Such he appeared to me, while I stood at the window and contemplated his deportment ; and then he died.

I am sensible of the tenderness and affectionate kindness with which you recollect our past intercourse, and express your hopes of my future restoration. I, too, within the last eight months, have had my hopes, though they have been of short duration ; cut off, like the foam upon the waters. Some previous adjustments, indeed, are necessary, before a lasting expectation of comfort can have place in me. There are those persuasions in my mind which either entirely forbid the entrance of hope, or, if it enter, immediately eject it. They are incompatible with any such inmate, and must be turned out themselves before so desirable a guest can possibly have secure possession. This, you say, will be done. It may be, but it is not done yet ; nor has a single step in the course of God's dealings with me been taken towards it. If I mend, no creature ever mended so slowly that recovered at last. I am

like a slug or snail, that has fallen into a deep well : slug as he is, he performs his descent with an alacrity proportioned to his weight ; but he does not crawl up again quite so fast. Mine was a rapid plunge ; but my return to daylight, if I am indeed returning, is leisurely enough.—I wish you a swift progress, and a pleasant one, through the great subject that you have in hand ; and set that value upon your letters to which they are in themselves entitled, but which is certainly encreased by that peculiar attention which the writer of them pays to me. Were I such as I once was, I should say that I have a claim upon your particular notice which nothing ought to supersede. Most of your ~~former~~ connexions you may fairly be said to have formed by your own act ; but your connexion with me was the work of God. The kine that went up with the ark from Bethshe-mesh left what they loved behind them, in obedience to an impression which to them was perfectly dark and unintelligible. Your journey to Huntingdon was not less wonderful. He, indeed, who sent you, knew well wherefore, but you knew not. That dispensation, therefore, would furnish me, as long as we can both remember it, with a plea for some distinction at your hands, had I occasion to use and urge it, which I have not. But I am altered since that time ; and if your affection for me had ceased, you might very reasonably justify your change by mine. I can say nothing for myself at present ; but this I can venture to foretell, that should the restoration of which my friends assure me obtain, I shall undoubtedly love those who have continued to love me, even in a state of transformation from my former self, much more than ever. I doubt not that Nebuchadnezzar had friends in his prosperity ; all kings have many. But when his nails become like eagles' claws, and he ate grass like an ox, I suppose he had few to pity him.

* * * * *

I am glad that Johnson is in fact a civiller man than I supposed him. My quarrel with him was not for any stricture of his upon my poetry, (for he has made several, and many of them have been judicious, and my work will be the better for them,) but for a certain rudeness with which he questioned my judgment of a writer of the last century, though I only mention the effect that his verses had upon me when a boy. There certainly was at the time a bustle in his temper, occasioned, I imagine, by my being a little importunate with him to proceed. He has, however, recovered himself since; and, except that the press seems to have stood still this last week, has printed as fast as I could wish. Had he kept the same pace from the beginning, the book had been published, as indeed it ought to have been, three months ago. That evil report of his indolence reaches me from every body that knows him, and is so general, that had I a work, or the publication of one in hand, the expenses of which I intended to take the hazard of upon myself, I should be very much afraid to employ him. He who will neglect himself cannot well be expected to attend to the interests of another.

We are going to pay Mr. Pomfret a morning visit. Our errand is to see a fine bed of tulips, a sight that I never saw. Fine painting, and God the artist.—Mrs. Unwin has something to say in the cover. I leave her therefore to make her own courtesy, and only add that I am yours and Mrs. Newton's

Affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 4, 1785.

Mr. Greatheed had your letter the day after we received it. He is a well-bred, agreeable young man, and one whose eyes have been opened, I doubt not, for the benefit of others as well as for his own. He preached at Olney, a day or two ago, and I have reason to think with acceptance and success. One person, at least, who had been in prison some weeks, received his enlargement under him. I should have been glad to have been a hearer; but that privilege is not allowed me yet. Indeed, since I told you that I had hope, I have never ceased to despair; and have repented that I made my boast so soon, more than once. A king may forbid a man to appear before him, and it were strange if the King of kings might not do the same. I know it to be his will that I should not enter into his presence now; when the prohibition is taken off, I shall enter; but in the mean time, I should neither please him, nor serve myself, by intruding.

My book is at length printed, and I returned the last proof to Johnson on Tuesday. I have ordered a copy to Charles Square, and have directed Johnson to enclose one with it, addressed to John Bacon, Esq. I was obliged to give you this trouble, not being sure of the place of his abode. I have taken the liberty to mention him, as an artist, in terms that he well deserves. The passage was written soon after I received the engraving with which he favoured me, and while the impression that it made upon me was yet warm. He will, therefore, excuse the liberty that I have taken, and place it to the account of those feelings which he himself excited.

The walking season is returned. We visit the wilderness

daily. Mr. Throckmorton, last summer, presented me with a key of his garden. The family are all absent, except the priest and a servant or two; so that the honeysuckles, lilacs, and syringas, are all our own.

We are well, and our united love attends yourselves and the young ladies.

Yours, my dear friend,

With much affection,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 25, 1785.

A note that we received from Mr. Scott, by your desire, informing us of the amendment of Mrs. Newton's health, demands our thanks, having relieved us from no little anxiety upon her account. The welcome purport of it was soon after confirmed by Sally Johnson, so that, at present, we feel ourselves at liberty to hope that by this time Mrs. Newton's recovery is complete. Sally's looks do credit to the air of Hoxton. She seems to have lost nothing, either in complexion or dimensions, by her removal hence; and, which is still more to the credit of your great town, she seems in spiritual things also, to be the very same Sally whom we knew once at Olney. Situation therefore is nothing. They who have the means of grace, and an art to use them, will thrive any where; others no where. More than a few, who were formerly ornaments of this garden which you once watered, here flourished, and here have seemed to wither. Others, transplanted into a soil apparently less favourable to their growth, either find the exchange an advantage, or at least are not impaired by it. Of

myself, who had once both leaves and fruit, but who have now neither, I say nothing; or only this,—That when I am overwhelmed with despair, I repine at my barrenness, and think it hard to be thus blighted; but when a glimpse of hope breaks in upon me, I am contented to be the sapless thing I am, knowing that He who has commanded me to wither, can command me to flourish again, when He pleases. My experiences, however, of this latter kind, are rare and transient. The light that reaches me cannot be compared either to that of the sun or of the moon. It is a flash in a dark night, during which the heavens seem opened only to shut again.

We enquired, but could not learn, that any thing memorable passed in the last moments of poor Nathan. I listened in expectation that he would at least acknowledge what all who knew him in his more lively days had so long seen and lamented, his neglect of the best things, and his eager pursuit of riches. But he was totally silent upon that subject. Yet it was evident that the cares of this world had choked in him much of the good seed, and that he was no longer the Nathan whom we have so often heard at the old house, rich in spirit, though poor in expression; whose desires were unutterable in every sense, both because they were too big for language, and because Nathan had no language for them. I believe with you, however, that he is safe at home. He had a weak head and strong passions, which He who made him well knew, and for which He would undoubtedly make great allowance. The forgiveness of God is large and absolute; so large, that though in general He calls for confession of our sins, He sometimes dispenses with that preliminary, and will not suffer even the delinquent himself to mention his transgression. He has so forgiven it, that He seems to have forgotten it too, and will have the sinner to forget it

also. Such instances perhaps, may not be common, but I know that there have been such, and it might be so with Nathan.

I know not what Johnseon is about, neither do I now enquire. It will be a month to-morrow since I returned him the last proof. He might, I suppose, have published by this time, without hurrying himself into a fever, or breaking his neck through the violence of his dispatch. But having never seen the book advertised, I conclude that he has not. Had the parliament risen at the usual time, he would have been just too late, and though it sits longer than usual, or is likely to do so, I should not wonder if he were too late at last. Dr. Johnson laughs at Savage for charging the still-birth of a poem of his upon the bookseller's delay; yet when Dr. Johnson had a poem of his own to publish, no man ever discovered more anxiety to meet the market. But I have taken thought about it, till I am grown weary of the subject, and at last have placed myself much at my ease upon the cushion of this one resolution; that if ever I have dealings hereafter with my present manager, we will proceed upon other terms.

Mr. Wright called here last Sunday, by whom Lord Dartmouth made obliging enquiries after the volume, and was pleased to say that he was impatient to see it. I told him that I had ordered a copy to his Lordship, which I hoped he would receive, if not soon, at least before he should retire into the country. I have also ordered one to Mr. Barham.

We suffer in this country very much by drought. The corn, I believe, is in most places thin, and the hay harvest amounts in some to not more than the fifth of a crop. Heavy taxes, excessive levies for the poor, and lean acres, have brought our farmers almost to their wits' end; and many, who are not farmers, are not very remote from the same point of despondency. I do not despond, because I was never much addicted to anxious

thoughts about the future, in respect of temporals. But I feel myself a little angry with a minister, who, when he imposed a tax upon gloves, was not ashamed to call them a luxury. Caps and boots lined with fur, are not accounted a luxury in Russia, neither can gloves be reasonably deemed such in a climate sometimes hardly less severe than that. Nature, indeed, is content with little, and luxury seems, in some respect, rather relative, than of a fixed construction. Accordingly it may become, in time, a luxury for an Englishman to wear breeches, because it is possible to exist without them, and because persons of a moderate income may find them too expensive. I hope, however, to be hid in the dust before that day shall come; for having worn them so many years, if they be indeed a luxury, they are such a one as I could very ill spare; yet spare them I must, if I cannot afford to wear them.

We are tolerably well in health, and as to spirits, much as usual—seldom better, sometimes worse.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 9, 1785.

You wrong your own judgment when you represent it as not to be trusted; and mine, if you suppose that I have that opinion of it. Had you disapproved, I should have been hurt and mortified. No man's disapprobation would have hurt me more. Your favourable sentiments of my book must consequently give me pleasure in the same proportion. By the post, last Sunday, I had a letter from Lord Dartmouth, in which he thanked me for my volume, of which he had read only a part.

Of that part, however, he expresses himself in terms with which my authorship has abundant cause to be satisfied ; and adds, that the specimen has made him impatient for the whole. I have likewise received a letter from a judicious friend of mine in London, and a man of fine taste, unknown to you, who speaks of it in the same language. Fortified by these cordials, I feel myself qualified to face the world without much anxiety, and delivered in a great measure from those fears which, I suppose, all men feel upon the like occasion.

My first volume I sent, as you may remember, to the Lord Chancellor, accompanied by a friendly but respectful epistle. His Lordship, however, thought it not worth his while to return me any answer, or to take the least notice of my present. I sent it also to Colman, manager of the Haymarket theatre, with whom I once was intimate. He likewise proved too great a man to recollect me ; and though he has published since, did not account it necessary to return the compliment. I have allowed myself to be a little pleased with an opportunity to show them that I resent their treatment of me, and have sent this book to neither of them. They, indeed, are the former friends to whom I particularly allude in my epistle to Mr. Hill ; and it is possible that they may take to themselves a censure that they so well deserve. If not, it matters not ; for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter.

If Mr. Bates has found it difficult to furnish you with a motto to your volumes, I have no reason to imagine that I shall do it easily. I shall not leave my books unransacked ; but there is something so new and peculiar in the occasion that suggested your subject, that I question whether, in all the classics, can be found a sentence suited to it. Our sins and follies, in this country, assume a shape that Heathen writers had never any opportunity to notice. They deified the dead, indeed, but not in the

Temple of Jupiter. The new-made god had an altar of his own; and they conducted the ceremony without sacrilege or confusion. It is possible, however, and I think barely so, that somewhat may occur susceptible of accommodation to your purpose; and if it should, I shall be happy to serve you with it.

I told you, I believe, that the spinney has been cut down; and, though it may seem sufficient to have mentioned such an occurrence once, I cannot help recurring to the melancholy theme. Last night, at near nine o'clock, we entered it for the first time this summer. We had not walked many yards in it, before we perceived that this pleasant retreat is destined never to be a pleasant retreat again. In one more year, the whole will be a thicket. That which was once the serpentine walk is now in a state of transformation, and is already become as woody as the rest. Poplars and elms without number are springing in the turf. They are now as high as the knee. Before the summer is ended, they will be twice as high; and the growth of another season will make them trees. It will then be impossible for any but a sportsman and his dog to penetrate it. The desolation of the whole scene is such, that it sunk our spirits. The ponds are dry. The circular one, in front of the hermitage, is filled with flags and rushes; so that if it contains any water, not a drop is visible. The weeping willow at the side of it, the only ornamental plant that has escaped the axe, is dead. The ivy and the moss, with which the hermitage was lined, are torn away; and the very mats that covered the benches have been stripped off, rent in tatters, and trodden under foot. So farewell, spinney; I have promised myself that I will never enter it again. We have both prayed in it: you for me, and I for you. But it is desecrated from this time forth, and the voice of prayer will be heard in it no more. The fate of it in this respect, however deplorable, is not peculiar. The spot

where Jacob anointed his pillar, and, which is more apposite, the spot once honoured with the presence of Him who dwelt in the bush, have long since suffered similar disgrace, and are become common ground.

There is great severity in the application of the text you mention—I am *their music*. But it is not the worse for that. We both approve it highly. The other in Ezekiel does not seem quite so pat. The prophet complains that his word was to the people like a pleasant song, heard with delight, but soon forgotten. At the commemoration, I suppose that the word is nothing, but the music all in all. The Bible, however, will abundantly supply you with applicable passages. All passages, indeed, that animadvert upon the profanation of God's house and worship, seem to present themselves upon the occasion.

Accept our love and best wishes; and believe me, my dear friend, with warm and true affection,

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

August 6, 1785.

I found your account of what you experienced in your state of maiden authorship very entertaining, because very natural. I suppose that no man ever made his first sally from the press without a conviction that all eyes and ears would be engaged to attend him; at least, without a thousand anxieties lest they should not. But, however arduous and interesting such an enterprise may be in the first instance, it seems to me that our feelings on the occasion soon become obtuse. I can answer, at least, for one. Mine are by no means what they were when

I published my first volume. I am even so indifferent to the matter, that I can truly assert myself guiltless of the very idea of my book sometimes whole days together. God knows that my mind having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world and its opinion of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush. Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavoured to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God gave me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain. Accordingly, I have mingled much truth with much trifle; and such truths as deserved, at least, to be clad as well and as handsomely as I could clothe them. If the world approve me not, so much the worse for them, but not for me. I have only endeavoured to serve them, and the loss will be their own. And as to their commendations, if I should chance to win them, I feel myself equally invulnerable there. The view that I have had of myself, for many years, has been so truly humiliating, that I think the praises of all mankind could not hurt me. God knows that I speak my present sense of the matter at least most truly, when I say, that the admiration of creatures like myself seems to me a weapon the least dangerous that my worst enemy could employ against me. I am fortified against it by such solidity of real self-abasement, that I deceive myself most egregiously if I do not heartily despise it. Praise belongeth to God; and I seem to myself to covet it no more than I covet divine honours. Could I assuredly hope that God would at last deliver me, I should have reason to thank him for all that I have suffered, were it only for the sake of this single fruit of my affliction,—that it has taught me how much more contemptible I am

in myself than I ever before suspected, and has reduced my former share of self-knowledge (of which at that time I had a tolerable good opinion) to a mere nullity, in comparison with what I have acquired since. Self is a subject of inscrutable misery and mischief, and can never be studied to so much advantage as in the dark : for as the bright beams of the sun seem to impart a beauty to the foulest objects, and can make even a dunghill smile, so the light of God's countenance, vouchsafed to a fallen creature, so sweetens him and softens him for the time, that he seems, both to others and to himself, to have nothing savage or sordid about him. But the heart is a nest of serpents, and will be such while it continues to beat. If God cover the mouth of that nest with his hand, they are hush and snug; but if he withdraw his hand, the whole family lift up their heads and hiss, and are as active and venomous as ever. This I always professed to believe from the time that I had embraced the truth, but never knew it as I know it now. To what end I have been made to know it as I do, whether for the benefit of others or for my own, or for both, or for neither, will appear hereafter.

What I have written leads me naturally to the mention of a matter that I had forgot. I should blame nobody, not even my intimate friends, and those who have the most favourable opinion of me, were they to charge the publication of John Gilpin, at the end of so much solemn and serious truth, to the score of the author's vanity; and to suspect that, however sober I may be upon proper occasions, I have yet that itch of popularity that would not suffer me to sink my title to a jest that had been so successful. But the case is not such. When I sent the copy of the *Task* to Johnson, I desired, indeed, Mr. Unwin to ask him the question, whether or not he would choose to make it a part of the volume? This I did merely with

a view to promote the sale of it. Johnson answered, "By all means." Some months afterward, he enclosed a note to me in one of my packets, in which he expressed a change of mind, alleging, that to print John Gilpin would only be to print what had been hackneyed in every magazine, in every shop, and at the corner of every street. I answered, that I desired to be entirely governed by his opinion; and that if he chose to wave it, I should be better pleased with the omission. Nothing more passed between us upon the subject, and I concluded that I should never have the immortal honour of being generally known as the author of John Gilpin. In the last packet, however, down came John, very fairly printed, and equipped for public appearance. The business having taken this turn, I concluded that Johnson had adopted my original thought, that it might prove advantageous to the sale; and as he had had the trouble and expense of printing it, I corrected the copy, and let it pass. Perhaps, however, neither the book nor the writer may be made much more famous by John's good company, than they would have been without it; for the volume has never yet been advertised, nor can I learn that Johnson intends it. He fears the expense, and the consequence must be prejudicial. Many who would purchase will remain uninformed: but I am perfectly content.

I have considered your motto, and like the purport of it; but the best, because the most laconic manner of it seems to be this—

Cum talis sis, sis noster;

utinam being, in my account of it, unnecessary.

Yours, my dear friend, most truly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 27, 1785.

I did very warmly and very sincerely thank Mr. Bacon for his most friendly and obliging letter; but having written my acknowledgments in the cover, I suppose that they escaped your notice. I should not have contented myself with transmitting them through your hands, but should have addressed them immediately to himself, but that I foresaw plainly this inconvenience: that, in writing to him on such an occasion, I must almost unavoidably make self and self's book the subject. Therefore it was, as Mrs. Unwin can vouch for me, that I denied myself that pleasure. I place this matter now in the van of all that I have to say; first, that you may not overlook it; secondly, because, it is uppermost in my consideration; and thirdly, because I am impatient to be exculpated from the seeming omission.

You told me, I think, that you seldom read the papers. In our last we had an extract from Johnson's Diary, or whatever else he called it. It is certain that the publisher of it is neither much a friend to the cause of religion nor to the author's memory; for, by the specimen of it that has reached us, it seems to contain only such stuff as has a direct tendency to expose both to ridicule. His prayers for the dead, and his minute account of the rigour with which he observed church fasts, whether he drank tea or coffee, whether with sugar or without, and whether one or two dishes of either, are the most important items to be found in this childish register of the great Johnson, supreme dictator in the chair of literature, and almost a driveller in his closet: a melancholy witness to testify how much of the wisdom of this world may consist with almost infantine ignorance of the affairs

of a better. I remember a good man at Huntingdon, who, I doubt not, is now with God, and he also kept a Diary. After his death, through the neglect or foolish wantonness of his executors, it came abroad for the amusement of his neighbours. All the town saw it, and all the town found it highly diverting. It contained much more valuable matter than the poor Doctor's Journal seems to do; but it contained also a faithful record of all his deliverances from wind (for he was much troubled with flatulence), by whatever vent it escaped him; together with pious acknowledgments of the mercy. There is certainly a call for gratitude, whatsoever benefit we receive; and it is equally certain, that we ought to be humbled under the recollection of our least offences: but it would have been as well if neither my old friend had recorded his eructations, nor the Doctor his dishes of sugarless tea, or the dinner at which he ate too much. I wonder, indeed, that any man of such learned eminence as Johnson, who knew that every word he uttered was deemed oracular, and that every scratch of his pen was accounted a treasure, should leave behind him what he would have blushed to exhibit while he lived. If Virgil would have burnt his *Æneid*, how much more reason had these good men to have burnt their Journals.

Mr. Perry will leave none such behind him. He is dying, as I suppose you have heard. Dr. Kerr, who, I think, has visited him twice or thrice, desired at his last visit to be no more sent for. He pronounced his case hopeless; for that his thigh and leg would mortify. He is, however, in a most comfortable frame of mind. So long as he thought it possible that he might recover, he was much occupied with a review of his ministry; and under a deep impression of his deficiencies in that function, assured Mr. R—— that he intended, when he should enter upon it again, to be much more diligent than he had been. He was conscious, he said, that many fine things had been said of him;

but that, though he trusted he had found grace so to walk as not to dishonour his office, he was conscious, at the same time, how little he deserved them. This, with much more to the same purport, passed on Sunday last. On Thursday, Mr. R—— was with him again; and at that time Mr. Perry knew that he must die. The rules and cautions that he had before prescribed to himself, he then addressed directly to his visitor. He exhorted him, by all means, to be earnest and affectionate in his applications to the unconverted, and not less solicitous to admonish the careless, with a head full of light, and a heart alienated from the ways of God; and those, no less, who being wise in their own conceit, were much occupied in matters above their reach, and very little with subjects of immediate and necessary concern. He added, that he had received from God, during his illness, other views of sin than he had ever been favoured with before; and exhorted him by all means to be watchful. Mr. R—— being himself the reporter of these conversations, it is to be supposed that they impressed him. Admonitions from such lips, and in a dying time too, must have their weight; and it is well with the hearer, when the instruction abides with him. But our own view of these matters is, I believe, that alone which can effectually serve us. The representations of a dying man may strike us at the time; and, if they stir up in us a spirit of self-examination and enquiry, so that we rest not till we have made his views and experience our own, it is well; otherwise, the wind that passes us is hardly sooner gone, than the effect of the most serious exhortations.

Farewell, my friend. My views of my spiritual state are, as you say, altered; but they are yet far from being such as they must be, before I can be enduringly comforted.

Yours, unfeignedly,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 24, 1785.

I am sorry that an excursion, which you would otherwise have found so agreeable, was attended with so great a drawback upon its pleasures as Miss Cunningham's illness must needs have been. Had she been able to bathe in the sea, it might have been of service to her, but I knew her weakness and delicacy of habit to be such as did not encourage any very sanguine hopes that the regimen would suit her. I remember Southampton well, having spent much time there; but though I was young, and had no objections on the score of conscience either to dancing or cards, I never was in the assembly-room in my life. I never was fond of company, and especially disliked it in the country. A walk to Netley Abbey, or to Freemantle, or to Redbridge, or a book by the fire-side, had always more charms for me than any other amusement that the place afforded. I was also a sailor, and being of Sir Thomas Hesketh's party, who was himself born one, was often pressed into the service. But though I gave myself an air and wore trowsers, I had no genuine right to that honour, disliking much to be occupied in great waters, unless in the finest weather. How they continue to elude the wearisomeness that attends a sea-life, who take long voyages, you know better than I; but for my own part, I seldom have sailed so far as from Hampton river to Portsmouth, without feeling the confinement irksome, and sometimes to a degree that was almost insupportable. There is a certain perverseness, of which I believe all men have a share, but of which no man has a larger share than I—I mean that temper, or humour, or whatever it is to be called, that indisposes us to a situation, though not unpleasant in itself, merely because we cannot get out of it. I could

not endure the room in which I now write, were I conscious that the door were locked. In less than five minutes I should feel myself a prisoner, though I can spend hours in it, under an assurance that I may leave it when I please, without experiencing any tedium at all. It was for this reason, I suppose, that the yacht was always disagreeable to me. Could I have stepped out of it into a corn-field or a garden, I should have liked it well enough ; but being surrounded with water, I was as much confined in it as if I had been surrounded by fire, and did not find that it made me any adequate compensation for such an abridgement of my liberty. I make little doubt but Noah was glad when he was enlarged from the ark ; and we are sure that Jonah was, when he came out of the fish ; and so was I to escape from the good sloop the Harriet.

In my last, I wrote you word that Mr. Perry was given over by his friends, and pronounced a dead man by his physician. Just when I had reached the end of the foregoing paragraph, he came in. His errand hither was to bring two letters, which I enclose ; one is to yourself, in which he will give you, I doubt not, such an account both of his body and mind, as will make all that I might say upon those subjects superfluous. The only consequences of his illness seem to be, that he looks a little pale, and that though always a most excellent man, he is still more angelic than he was. Illness sanctified is better than health. But I know a man who has been a sufferer by a worse illness than his, almost these fourteen years, and who at present is only the worse for it.

Mr. Scott called upon us yesterday ; he is much inclined to set up a Sunday school, if he can raise a fund for the purpose. Mr. Jones has had one some time at Clifton, and Mr. Unwin writes me word that he has been thinking of nothing else day and night, for a fortnight. It is a wholesome measure, that

seems to bid fair to be pretty generally adopted, and, for the good effects that it promises, deserves well to be so. I know not, indeed, while the spread of the gospel continues so limited as it is, how a reformation of manners, in the lower class of mankind, can be brought to pass; or by what other means the utter abolition of all principle among them, moral as well as religious, can possibly be prevented. Heathenish parents can only bring up heathenish children; an assertion nowhere oftener or more clearly illustrated than at Olney; where children, seven years of age, infest the streets every evening with curses and with songs, to which it would be unseemly to give their proper epithet. Such urchins as these could not be so diabolically accomplished, unless by the connivance of their parents. It is well, indeed, if in some instances their parents be not themselves their instructors. Judging by their proficiency, one can hardly suppose any other. It is, therefore, doubtless an act of the greatest charity, to snatch them out of such hands, before the inveteracy of the evil shall have made it desperate. Mr. Teedon, I should imagine, will be employed as a teacher, should this expedient be carried into effect. I know not, at least, that we have any other person among us so well qualified for the service. He is indisputably a Christian man, and miserably poor, whose revenues need improvement, as much as any children in the world can possibly need instruction.

Believe me, my dear friend,

With true affection, yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

Oct. 11, 1785.

You began your letter with an apology for long silence, and it is now incumbent upon me to do the same ; and the rather, as your kind invitation to Wargrave entitled you to a speedier answer. The truth is, that I am become, if not a man of business, yet a busy man, and have been engaged almost this twelve-month in a work that will allow of no long interruption. On this account it was impossible for me to accept your obliging summons ; and having only to tell you that I could not, it appeared to me as a matter of no great moment, whether you received that intelligence soon or late.

You do me justice, when you ascribe my printed epistle to you, to my friendship for you ; though, in fact, it was equally owing to the opinion that I have of yours for me. Having, in one part or other of my two volumes, distinguished by name the majority of those few for whom I entertain a friendship, it seemed to me that it would be unjustifiable negligence to omit yourself ; and if I took that step without communicating to you my intention, it was only to gratify myself the more, with the hope of surprising you agreeably. Poets are dangerous persons to be acquainted with, especially if a man have that in his character that promises to shine in verse. To that very circumstance it is owing, that you are now figuring away in mine. For, notwithstanding what you say on the subject of honesty and friendship, that they are not splendid enough for public celebration, I must still think of them as I did before, —that there are no qualities of the mind and heart that can deserve it better. I can, at least for my own part, look round about upon the generality, and, while I see them deficient in

those grand requisites of a respectable character, am not able to discover that they possess any other, of value enough to atone for the want of them.

I beg that you will present my respects to Mrs. Hill, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 16, 1785.

To have sent a child to heaven is a great honour and a great blessing, and your feelings on such an occasion may well be such as render you rather an object of congratulation than of condolence. And were it otherwise, yet, having yourself free access to all the sources of genuine consolation, I feel that it would be little better than impertinence in me to suggest any. An escape from a life of suffering to a life of happiness and glory, is such a deliverance as leaves no room for the sorrow of survivors, unless they sorrow for themselves. We cannot, indeed, lose what we love without regretting it; but a Christian is in possession of such alleviations of that regret, as the world knows nothing of. Their beloveds, when they die, go they know not whither; and if they suppose them, as they generally do, in a state of happiness, they have yet but an indifferent prospect of joining them in that state hereafter. But it is not so with you. You both know whither your beloved is gone, and you know that you shall follow her; and you know also that in the mean time she is incomparably happier than yourself. So far, therefore, as she is concerned, nothing has come to pass but what was most fervently to be wished. I do not

know that I am singularly selfish ; but one of the first thoughts that your account of Miss Cunningham's dying moments and departure suggested to me, had self for its object. It struck me that she was not born when I sank into darkness; and that she is gone to heaven before I have emerged again. What a lot, said I to myself, is mine! whose helmet is fallen from my head, and whose sword from my hand, in the midst of the battle; who was stricken down to the earth when I least expected it; who had just begun to cry victory! when I was defeated myself; and who have been trampled upon so long, that others have had time to conquer and to receive their crown, before I have been able to make one successful effort to escape from under the feet of my enemies. It seemed to me, therefore, that if you mourned for Miss Cunningham, you gave those tears to her to which I only had a right, and I was almost ready to exclaim, "I am the dead, and not she; you misplace your sorrows."—I have sent you the history of my mind on this subject without any disguise; if it does not please you, pardon it at least, for it is the truth. The unhappy, I believe, are always selfish. I have, I confess, my comfortable moments; but they are like the morning dew, so suddenly do they pass away and are gone.

It should seem a matter of small moment to me, who never hear him, whether Mr. Scott shall be removed from Olney to the Lock, or no; yet, in fact, I believe that few interest themselves more in that event than I. He knows my manner of life, and has ceased long since to wonder at it. A new minister would need information, and I am not ambitious of having my tale told to a stranger. He would also, perhaps, think it necessary to assail me with arguments, which would be more profitably disposed of, if he should discharge them against the walls of a tower. I wish, therefore, for the continuance of Mr.

Scott. He honoured me so far as to consult me twice upon the subject. At our first interview, he seemed to discern but little in the proposal that entitled it to his approbation. But when he came the second time, we observed that his views of it were considerably altered. He was warm—he was animated; difficulties had disappeared, and allurements had started up in their place. I could not say to him, Sir, you are naturally of a sanguine temper; and he that is so, cannot too much distrust his own judgment;—but I am glad that he will have the benefit of yours. It seems to me, however, that the minister who shall re-illumine the faded glories of the Lock, must not only practise great fidelity in his preaching, to which task Mr. Scott is perfectly equal, but must do it with much address; and it is hardly worth while to observe, that his excellence does not lie that way, because he is ever ready to acknowledge it himself. But I have nothing to suggest upon this subject that will be new to you, and therefore drop it; the rather, indeed, because I may reasonably suppose that by this time the point is decided.

I have reached that part of my paper which I generally fill with intelligence, if I can find any: but there is a great dearth of it at present; and Mr. Scott has probably anticipated me in all the little that there is. Lord P—— having dismissed Mr. Jones from his service, the people of Turvey have burnt him [Mr. Jones] in effigy, with a bundle of quick-thorn under his arm. What consequences are to follow his dismissal, is uncertain. His Lordship threatens him with a lawsuit; and unless their disputes can be settled by arbitration, it is not unlikely that the profits of poor Jones's stewardship will be melted down at Westminster. He has laboured hard, and no doubt with great integrity, and has been rewarded with hard words and scandalous treatment.

Mr. Scott (which perhaps he may not have told you, for he

did not mention it here) has met with similar treatment at a place in this country called Hinksey, or by some such name.* But he suffered in effigy for the Gospel's sake;—a cause in which I presume he would not be unwilling, if need were, to be burnt *in propria persona*.

I have nothing to add, but that we are well, and remember you with much affection; and that I am, my dear friend,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 5, 1785.

Were it with me as in days past, you should have no cause to complain of my tardiness in writing. You supposed that I would have accepted your packet as an answer to my last; and so indeed I did, and felt myself overpaid; but though a debtor, and deeply indebted too, had not wherewithal to discharge the arrear. You do not know nor suspect what a conquest I sometimes gain, when I only take up the pen with a design to write. Many a time have I resolved to say to all my few correspondents,—I take my leave of you for the present; if I live to see better days, you shall hear from me again.—I have been driven to the very verge of this measure; and, even upon this occasion, was upon the point of desiring Mrs. Unwin to become my substitute. She, indeed, offered to write in my stead; but fearing that you would understand me to be even

* The Rev. John Scott, to whom this passage has been communicated, informs the Editor, that the name of the place in which his late father experienced this treatment was not *Hinksey*, but *Tingewick*, near Buckingham.

worse than I am, I rather chose to answer for myself.—So much for a subject with which I could easily fill the sheet, but with which I have occupied too great a part of it already. It is time that I should thank you, and return you Mrs. Unwin's thanks for your Narrative.* I told you, in my last, in what manner I felt myself affected by the abridgment of it contained in your letter; and have therefore only to add, upon that point, that the impression made upon me by the relation at large was of a like kind. I envy all that live in the enjoyment of a good hope, and much more all who die to enjoy the fruit of it: but I recollect myself in time; I resolved not to touch that chord again, and yet was just going to trespass upon my resolution. As to the rest, your history of your happy niece is just what it should be,—clear, affectionate, and plain; worthy of her, and worthy of yourself. How much more beneficial to the world might such a memorial of an unknown, but pious and believing child, eventually prove, would the supercilious learned condescend to read it, than the history of all the kings and heroes that ever lived! But the world has its objects of admiration, and God has objects of his love. Those make a noise and perish; and these weep silently for a short season, and live for ever. I had rather have been your niece, or the writer of her story, than any Cæsar that ever thundered.

The vanity of human attainments was never so conspicuously exemplified as in the present day. The sagacious moderns make discoveries, which, how useful they may prove to themselves I know not; certainly they do no honour to the ancients. Homer and Virgil have enjoyed (if the dead have any such enjoyments) an unrivalled reputation as poets, through a long succession of ages: but it is now shrewdly suspected that Homer

* Authentic Narrative of some remarkable and interesting particulars in the Life of • • [Mr. Newton.]

did not compose the poems for which he has been so long applauded ; and it is even asserted by a certain Robert Heron, Esq., that Virgil never wrote a line worth reading. He is a pitiful plagiarist ; he is a servile imitator, a bungler in his plan, and has not a thought in his whole work that will bear examination. In short, he is any thing but what the literati for two thousand years have taken him to be—a man of genius and a fine writer. I fear that Homer's case is desperate. After the lapse of so many generations, it would be a difficult matter to elucidate a question which time and modern ingenuity together combine to puzzle. And I suppose that it were in vain for an honest plain man to enquire, If Homer did not write the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, who did ? The answer would undoubtedly be—It is no matter ; he did not : which is all that I undertook to prove. For Virgil, however, there still remains some consolation. The very same Mr. Heron, who finds no beauties in the *Æneid*, discovers not a single instance of the sublime in Scripture. Particularly he says, speaking of the prophets, that Ezekiel, although the filthiest of all writers, is the best of them. He, therefore, being the first of the learned who has reprobated even the style of the Scriptures, may possibly make the fewer proselytes to his judgment of the Heathen writer. For my own part, at least, had I been accustomed to doubt whether the *Æneid* were a noble composition or not, this gentleman would at once have decided the question for me ; and I should have been immediately assured, that a work must necessarily abound in beauties that had the happiness to displease a censorer of the Word of God. What enterprises will not an inordinate passion for fame suggest ? It prompted one man to fire the Temple of Ephesus ; another, to fling himself into a volcano ; and now has induced this wicked and unfortunate 'squire either to deny his

own feelings, or to publish to all the world that he has no feelings at all.*

This being the 5th of November, is the worst of all days in the year for letter-writing. Continually called upon to remember the bonfire, one is apt to forget every thing else. The boys at Olney have likewise a very entertaining sport, which commences annually upon this day. They call it Hockey; and it consists in dashing each other with mud, and the windows also, so that I am forced to rise now and then, and to threaten them with a horsewhip to preserve our own. We know that the Roman boys whipped tops, trundled the hoop, and played at tennis; but I believe we nowhere read that they delighted in these filthy aspersions: I am inclined, therefore, to give to the slovenly but ingenious youths of Olney full credit for the inven-

* The playful spirit in which the writer adverts to this subject appears to have yielded afterwards to a feeling of indignation; the following lines in his own hand-writing having been found by the Editor amongst his papers:—

On the Author of Letters on Literature.

The Genius of th' Augustan age
His head among Rome's ruins rear'd,
And bursting with heroic rage,
When literary Heron appear'd.

Thou hast, he cried, like him of old
Who set th' Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

And for traducing Virgil's name
Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd.

tion. It will be well if the Sunday-school may civilize them to a taste for more refined amusements.

Mr. Jones and Lord P— have parted at last; and after many bickerings, have parted upon amicable terms. Jones having delivered in an honest account, refused to falsify it to the prejudice of his own reputation, and his master threatened him with a lawsuit. But finding him inflexible, and not to be intimidated, he gave him his hand, treated him as a friend, and admitted him into his confidence. It is well for little folks that great folks are apt to be somewhat capricious; they would otherwise, perhaps, be at all times insolent and oppressive alike.

Mr. Scott is pestered with anonymous letters, but he conducts himself wisely; and the question whether he shall go to the Lock or not, seems hasting to a decision in the affirmative.

We are tolerably well; and Mrs. Unwin adds to mine, her affectionate remembrances of yourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 7, 1785.

Your time being so much occupied as to leave you no opportunity for a word more than the needful, I am the more obliged to you that you have found leisure even for that, and thank you for the note above acknowledged.

I know not at present what subject I could enter upon, by which I should not put you to an expense of moments that you can ill spare: I have often been displeased when a neighbour of mine, being himself an idle man, has delivered himself from the burthen of a vacant hour or two, by coming to repose his idle-

ness upon me. Not to incur, therefore, and deservedly, the blame that I have charged upon him, by interrupting you, who are certainly a busy man, whatever may be the case with myself, I shall only add that I am, with my respects to Mrs. Hill,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 3, 1785.

I am glad to hear that there is such a demand for your last Narrative. If I may judge of their general utility by the effect that they have heretofore had upon me, there are few things more edifying than death-bed memoirs. They interest every reader, because they speak of a period at which all must arrive, and afford a solid ground of encouragement to survivors to expect the same, or similar support and comfort, when it shall be their turn to die.

I also am employed in writing narrative, but not so useful. Employment, however, and with the pen is, through habit, become essential to my well-being; and to produce always original poems, especially of considerable length, is not so easy. For some weeks after I had finished the Task, and sent away the last sheet corrected, I was through necessity idle, and suffered not a little in my spirits for being so. One day, being in such distress of mind as was hardly supportable, I took up the Iliad; and merely to divert attention, and with no more preconception of what I was then entering upon, than I have at this moment of what I shall be doing this day twenty years hence, translated the twelve first lines of it. The same necessity pressing me again, I had recourse to the same expedient; and trans-

lated more. Every day bringing its occasion for employment with it, every day consequently added something to the work ; till at last I began to reflect thus :—The Iliad and the Odyssey together consist of about forty thousand verses. To translate these forty thousand verses will furnish me with occupation for a considerable time. I have already made some progress, and I find it a most agreeable amusement. Homer in point of purity, is a most blameless writer ; and, though he was not an enlightened man, has interspersed many great and valuable truths throughout both his poems. In short, he is in all respects a most venerable old gentleman, by an acquaintance with whom no man can disgrace himself. The literati are all agreed to a man, that, although Pope has given us two pretty poems under Homer's titles, there is not to be found in them the least portion of Homer's spirit, nor the least resemblance of his manner. I will try, therefore, whether I cannot copy him somewhat more happily myself. I have at least the advantage of Pope's faults and failings, which, like so many buoys upon a dangerous coast, will serve me to steer by, and will make my chance for success more probable. These, and many other considerations, but especially a mind that abhorred a vacuum as its chief bane, impelled me so effectually to the work, that ere long I mean to publish proposals for a subscription to it, having advanced so far as to be warranted in doing so. I have connexions, and no few such, by means of which I have the utmost reason to expect that a brisk circulation may be procured ; and if it should prove a profitable enterprise, the profit will not accrue to a man who may be said not to want it. It is a business such as it will not, indeed, lie much in your way to promote ; but, among your numerous connexions, it is possible that you may know some who would sufficiently interest themselves in such a work to be not unwilling to subscribe to it. I do not mean—far be it

from me—to put you upon making hazardous applications, where you might possibly incur a refusal, that would give you though but a moment's pain. You know best your own opportunities and powers in such a cause. If you can do but little, I shall esteem it much; and if you can do nothing, I am sure that it will not be for want of a will.

I have lately had three visits from my old schoolfellow Mr. Bagot, a brother of Lord Bagot, and of Mr. Chester of Chicheley. At his last visit he brought his wife with him, a most amiable woman, to see Mrs. Unwin. I told him my purpose, and my progress. He received the news with great pleasure; immediately subscribed a draft of twenty pounds; and promised me his whole heart, and his whole interest, which lies principally among people of the first fashion.

My correspondence has lately also been renewed with my dear cousin Lady Hesketh, whom I ever loved as a sister, (for we were in a manner brought up together,) and who writes to me as affectionately as if she were so. She also enters into my views and interests upon this occasion with a warmth that gives me great encouragement. The circle of *her* acquaintance is likewise very extensive; and I have no doubt that she will exert her influence to its utmost possibilities among them. I have other strings to my bow, (perhaps, as a translator of Homer, I should say, to my lyre,) which I cannot here enumerate; but, upon the whole, my prospect seems promising enough. I have not yet consulted Johnson upon the occasion, but intend to do it soon.

My spirits are somewhat better than they were. In the course of the last month, I have perceived a very sensible amendment. The hope of better days seems again to dawn upon me; and I have now and then an intimation, though slight and transient, that God has not abandoned me for ever.

Having been for some years troubled with an inconvenient stomach; and lately, with a stomach that will digest nothing without help; and we having reached the bottom of our own medical skill, into which we have dived to little or no purpose; I have at length consented to consult Dr. Kerr, and expect to see him in a day or two. Engaged as I am, and am likely to be, so long as I am capable of it, in writing for the press, I cannot well afford to entertain a malady that is such an enemy to all mental operations.

This morning is beautiful, and tempts me forth into the garden. It is all the walk that I can have at this season, but not all the exercise. I ring a peal every day upon the dumb-bells.

I am, my dear friend, most truly,

Yours and Mrs. Newton's,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 10, 1785.

What you say of my last volume gives me the sincerest pleasure. I have heard a like favourable report of it from several different quarters, but never any (for obvious reasons) that has gratified me more than yours. I have a relish for moderate praise, because it bids fair to be judicious; but praise excessive, such as our poor friend ——'s, (I have an uncle also who celebrates me exactly in the same language:)—such praise is rather too big for an ordinary swallow. I set down nine-tenths of it to the account of family partiality. I know no more than you what kind of a market my book has found; but this I believe, that had not Henderson died, and had it been worth my while to have given him an hundred pounds to have read it in public, it would

have been more popular than it is. I am at least very unwilling to esteem John Gilpin as better worth than all the rest that I have written, and he has been popular enough.

Your sentiments of Pope's Homer agree perfectly with those of every competent judge with whom I have at any time conversed about it. I never saw a copy so unlike the original. There is not, I believe, in all the world to be found an uninspired poem so simple as those of Homer; nor in all the world a poem more bedizened with ornaments than Pope's translation of them. Accordingly, the sublime of Homer in the hands of Pope becomes bloated and tumid, and his description tawdry. Neither had Pope the faintest conception of those exquisite discriminations of character for which Homer is so remarkable. All his persons, and equally upon all occasions, speak in an inflated and strutting phraseology, as Pope has managed them; although in the original, the dignity of their utterance, even when they are most majestic, consists principally in the simplicity of their sentiments and of their language. Another censure I must needs pass upon our Anglo-Grecian, out of many that obtrude themselves upon me, but for which I have neither time to spare, nor room; which is, that with all his great abilities he was defective in his feelings to a degree that some passages in his own poems make it difficult to account for. No writer more pathetic than Homer, because none more natural; and because none less natural than Pope in his version of Homer, therefore than he none less pathetic. But I shall tire you with a theme with which I would not wish to cloy you beforehand.

If the great change in my experience, of which you express so lively an expectation, should take place, and whenever it shall take place, you may securely depend upon receiving the first notice of it. But whether you come with congratulations, or whether without them, I need not say that you and yours will

always be most welcome here. Mrs. Unwin's love both to yourself and to Mrs. Newton joins itself as usual, and as warmly as usual, to that of

Yours, my dear friend,

Affectionately and faithfully,

W. C.

The following this moment occurs to me as a possible motto for the Messiah, if you do not think it too sharp :—

—Nunquam inducunt animum cantare, *rogati* ;
Injussi, nunquam desistunt.—

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 14, 1786.

My proposals are already printed. I ought rather to say, that they are ready for printing ; having near ten days ago returned the correction of the proof. But a cousin of mine, and one who will, I dare say, be very active in my literary cause, (I mean General Cowper,) having earnestly recommended it to me to annex a specimen, I have accordingly sent him one, extracted from the latter part of the last book of the Iliad, and consisting of a hundred and seven lines. I chose to extract it from that part of the poem, because if the reader should happen to find himself content with it, he will naturally be encouraged by it to hope well of the part preceding. Every man who can do any thing in the translating way is pretty sure to set off with spirit ; but in works of such a length, there is always danger of flagging near the close.

My subscription, I hope, will be more powerfully promoted than subscriptions generally are. I have a warm and affection-

ate friend in Lady Hesketh ; and one equally disposed, and even still more able to serve me, in the General above-mentioned. The Bagot family all undertake my cause with ardour ; and I have several others, of whose ability and good-will I could not doubt without doing them injustice. It will, however, be necessary to bestow yet much time on the revisal of this work, for many reasons ; and especially, because he who contends with Pope upon Homer's ground, can, of all writers, least afford to be negligent.

Mr. Scott brought me as much as he could remember of a kind message from Lord Dartmouth ; but it was rather imperfectly delivered. Enough of it, however, came to hand to convince me that his Lordship takes a friendly interest in my success. When his Lordship and I sat side by side, on the sixth form at Westminster, we little thought that in process of time, one of us was ordained to give a new translation of Homer. Yet, at that very time, it seems, I was laying the foundation of this superstructure.

Much love upon all accounts, to you and yours.

Adieu, my friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 18, 1786.

I feel myself truly obliged to you for the leave that you give me, to be less frequent in writing, and more brief than heretofore. I have a long work upon my hands ; and standing engaged to the public (for by this time I suppose my subscription papers to be gone abroad,) not only for the performance of it, but for the performance of it in a reasonable time, it seems

necessary to me not to intermit it often. My correspondence has also lately been renewed with several of my relations, and unavoidably engrosses now and then, one of the few opportunities that I can find for writing. I nevertheless intend, in the exchange of letters with you, to be as regular as I can be, and to use, like a friend, the friendly allowance that you have made me.

My reason for giving notice of an *Odyssey* as well as an *Iliad*, was this:—I feared that the public, being left to doubt whether I should ever translate the former, would be unwilling to treat with me for the latter; which they would be apt to consider as an odd volume, and unworthy to stand upon their shelves alone. It is hardly probable, however, that I should begin the *Odyssey* for some months to come, being now closely engaged in the revisal of my translation of the *Iliad*, which I compare, as I go, most minutely with the original. One of the great defects of Pope's translation is, that it is licentious. To publish, therefore, a translation, now, that should be at all chargeable with the same fault, that were not indeed as close and as faithful as possible, would be only *actum agere*, and had therefore better be left undone. Whatever be said of mine when it shall appear, it shall never be said that it is not faithful.

I thank you heartily, both for your wishes and prayers, that should a disappointment occur, I may not be too much hurt by it. Strange as it may seem to say it, and unwilling as I should be to say it to any person less candid than yourself, I will nevertheless say, that I have not entered on this work, unconnected as it must needs appear with the interests of the cause of God, without the direction of his providence, nor altogether unassisted by him in the performance of it. Time will show to what it ultimately tends. I am inclined to believe that it has a tendency to which I myself am, at present, perfectly a stran-

ger. Be that as it may, He knows my frame, and will consider that I am but dust; dust, into the bargain, that has been so trampled under foot and beaten, that a storm, less violent than an unsuccessful issue of such a business might occasion, would be sufficient to blow me quite away. But I will tell you honestly, I have no fears upon the subject. My predecessor has given me every advantage.

As I know not to what end this my present occupation may finally lead, so neither did I know, when I wrote it, or at all suspect, one valuable end, at least, that was to be answered by the Task. It has pleased God to prosper it; and being composed in blank verse, it is likely to prove as seasonable an introduction to a blank verse Homer, by the same hand, as any that could have been devised; yet when I wrote the last line of the Task, I as little suspected that I should ever engage in a version of the old Asiatic tale, as you do now.

I should choose for your general motto—

Carmina tum melius, cùm venerit ipse, canemus.

For vol. I.

Unum pro multis dabitur caput.

For vol. II.

Aspice, venturo latentur ut omnia sæclo.

It seems to me that you cannot have better than these.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 1, 1786.

I have made you wait long for an answer, and am now obliged to write in a hurry. But lest my longer silence should alarm you, hurried as I am, still I write. I told you, if I mistake not, that the circle of my correspondence has lately been enlarged; and it seems still encreasing, which, together with my poetical business, makes an *hour* a *momentous* affair. Pardon an unintentional pun. You need not fear for my health. It suffers nothing by my employment.

We, who in general see no company, are at present in expectation of a great deal; at least, if three different visits may be called so. Mr. and Mrs. Powley, in the first place, are preparing for a journey southward. She is far from well, but thinks herself well enough to travel, and feels an affectionate impatience for another sight of Olney.

In the next place, we expect, as soon as the season shall turn up bright and warm, General Cowper and his son. I have not seen him these twenty years and upwards; but our intercourse having been lately revived, is likely to become closer, warmer, and more intimate than ever.

Lady Hesketh also comes down in June; and if she can be accommodated with any thing in the shape of a dwelling at Olney, talks of making it always, in part, her summer residence. It has pleased God that I should, like Joseph, be put into a well; and because there are no Midianites in the way to deliver me, therefore my friends are coming down into the well to see me.

I wish you, we both wish you, all happiness in your new habitation: at least, you will be sure to find the situation more

commodious. I thank you for all your hints concerning my work, which shall be duly attended to. You may assure all whom it may concern, that all offensive elisions will be done away. With Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, I remain, my dear friend, affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 20, 1786.

Within this hour arrived three sets of your new publication,* for which we sincerely thank you. We have breakfasted since they came, and consequently, as you may suppose, have neither of us had yet an opportunity to make ourselves acquainted with the contents. I shall be happy (and when I say that, I mean to be understood in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word) if my frame of mind shall be such as may permit me to study them. But Adam's approach to the tree of life, after he had sinned, was not more effectually prohibited by the flaming sword that turned every way, than mine to its great Antetype has been now-almost these thirteen years, a short interval of three or four days, which passed about this time twelvemonth, alone excepted. For what reason it is that I am thus long excluded, if I am ever again to be admitted, is known to God only. I can say but this: that if he is still my Father, this paternal severity has, toward me, been such as that I have reason to account it unexampled. For though others have suffered desertion, yet few, I believe, for so long a time, and perhaps none a desertion accompanied with such experi-

* Messiah.

ences. But they have this belonging to them : that as they are not fit for recital, being made up merely of infernal ingredients, so neither are they susceptible of it ; for I know no language in which they could be expressed. They are as truly things which it is not possible for man to utter, as those were which Paul heard and saw in the third heaven. If the ladder of Christian experience reaches, as I suppose it does, to the very presence of God, it has nevertheless its foot in the abyss. And if Paul stood, as no doubt he did, in that experience of his to which I have just alluded, on the topmost round of it, I have been standing, and still stand on the lowest, in this thirteenth year that has passed since I descended. In such a situation of mind, encompassed by the midnight of absolute despair, and a thousand times filled with unspeakable horror, I first commenced an author. Distress drove me to it ; and the impossibility of subsisting without some employment, still recommends it. I am not, indeed, so perfectly hopeless as I was ; but I am equally in need of an occupation, being often as much, and sometimes even more, worried than ever. I cannot amuse myself, as I once could, with carpenters' or with gardeners' tools, or with squirrels and guinea-pigs. At that time I was a child. But since it has pleased God, whatever else he withholds, to restore to me a man's mind, I have put away childish things. Thus far, therefore, it is plain that I have not chosen or prescribed to myself my own way, but have been providentially led to it ; perhaps I might say, with equal propriety, compelled and scourged into it : for certainly, could I have made my choice, or were I permitted to make it even now, those hours which I spend in poetry I would spend with God. But it is evidently his will that I should spend them as I do, because every other way of employing them he himself continues to make impossible. If, in the course of such an occupa-

tion, or by inevitable consequence of it, either my former connexions are revived, or new ones occur, these things are as much a part of the dispensation as the leading points of it themselves; the effect, as much as the cause. If his purposes in thus directing me are gracious, he will take care to prove them such in the issue; and, in the mean time, will preserve me (for he is able to do that in one condition of life as in another) from all mistakes in conduct that might prove pernicious to myself, or give reasonable offence to others. I can say it as truly as it was ever spoken,—Here I am: let him do with me as seemeth him good.

At present, however, I have no connexions, at which either you, I trust, or any who love me and wish me well, have occasion to conceive alarm. Much kindness indeed I have experienced at the hands of several, some of them near relations, others not related to me at all; but I do not know that there is among them a single person from whom I am likely to catch contamination. I can say of them all, with more truth than Jacob uttered when he called kid venison, “The Lord thy God brought them unto me.” I could shew you among them two men, whose lives, though they have but little of what we call evangelical light, are ornaments to a Christian country; men who fear God more than some who even profess to love him. But I will not particularize farther on such a subject. Be they what they may, our situations are so distant, and we are likely to meet so seldom, that were they, as they are not, persons even of exceptionable manners, their manners would have little to do with me. We correspond, at present, only on the subject of what passed at Troy three thousand years ago; and they are matters that, if they can do no good, will at least hurt nobody.

Your friendship for me, and the proof that I see of it in your friendly concern for my welfare on this occasion, demanded that

I should be explicit. Assure yourself that I love and honour you, as upon all accounts, so especially for the interest that you take, and have ever taken in my welfare, most sincerely. I wish you all happiness in your new abode, all possible success in your ministry, and much fruit of your newly-published labours; and am, with Mrs. Unwin's love to yourself and Mrs. Newton,

Most affectionately yours,
My dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July, 1786.

I am not glad that I am obliged to apologise for an interval of three weeks that have elapsed since the receipt of yours; but not having it in my power to write oftener than I do, I am glad that my reason is such a one as you admit. In truth, my time is very much occupied; and the more because I not only have a long and laborious work in hand, for such it would prove at any rate, but because I make it a point to bestow my utmost attention upon it, and to give it all the finishing that the most scrupulous accuracy can command. As soon as breakfast is over, I retire to my nutshell of a summer-house, which is my verse-manufactory, and here I abide seldom less than three hours, and not often more. In the afternoon I return to it again; and all the day-light that follows, except what is devoted to a walk, is given to Homer. It is well for me, that a course which is now become necessary is so much my choice. The regularity of it, indeed, has been in the course of this last week a little interrupted, by the arrival of my dear cousin Lady Hesketh; but

with the new week I shall, as they say, turn over a new leaf, and put myself under the same rigorous discipline as before. Something, and not a little, is due to the feelings that the sight of the kindest relation that ever man was blessed with must needs give birth to after so long a separation. But she, whose anxiety for my success is, I believe, even greater than my own, will take care that I shall not play truant and neglect my proper business. It was an observation of a sensible man, whom I knew well in ancient days, (I mean when I was very young,) that people are never in reality happy when they boast much of being so. I feel myself accordingly well content to say, without any enlargement on the subject, that an enquirer after happiness might travel far, and not find a happier trio, than meet every day, either in our parlour, or in the parlour at the Vicarage. I will not say that mine is not occasionally somewhat dashed with the sable hue of those notions, concerning myself and my situation, that have occupied, or rather possessed me so long: but on the other hand, I can also affirm, that my Cousin's affectionate behaviour to us both, the sweetness of her temper, and the sprightliness of her conversation, relieve me in no small degree from the presence of them.

Mrs. Unwin is greatly pleased with your Sermons, and has told me so repeatedly; and the pleasure that they have given her awaits me also in due time, as I am well and confidently assured; both because the subject of them is the greatest and the most interesting that can fall under the pen of any writer, and because no writer can be better qualified to discuss it judiciously and feelingly than yourself. The third set with which you favoured us, we destined to Lady Hesketh; and in so disposing of them, are inclined to believe that we shall not err far from the mark at which you yourself directed them.

Our affectionate remembrances attend yourself and Mrs. New-

ton, to which you acquired an everlasting right while you dwelt under the roof where we dined yesterday. It is impossible that we should set our foot over the threshold of the Vicarage, without recollecting all your kindness.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND;

Aug. 5, 1786.

You have heard of our intended removal. The house that is to receive us is in a state of preparation, and, when finished, will be both smarter and more commodious than our present abode. But the circumstance that recommends it chiefly is its situation. Long confinement in the winter, and indeed for the most part in the autumn too, has hurt us both. A gravel walk, thirty yards long, affords but indifferent scope to the locomotive faculty: yet it is all that we have had to move in for eight months in the year, during thirteen years that I have been a prisoner. Had I been confined in the Tower, the battlements of it would have furnished me with a larger space. You say well, that there was a time when I was happy at Olney; and I am now as happy at Olney as I expect to be any where without the presence of God. Change of situation is with me no otherwise an object than as both Mrs. Unwin's health and mine may happen to be concerned in it. A fever of the slow and spirit-oppressing kind seems to belong to all, except the natives, who have dwelt in Olney many years; and the natives have putrid fevers. Both they and we, I believe, are immediately indebted for our respective maladies to an atmosphere encumbered with raw vapours issuing from flooded meadows; and we

in particular, perhaps, have fared the worse, for sitting so often, and sometimes for months, over a cellar filled with water. These ills we shall escape in the uplands; and as we may reasonably hope, of course, their consequences. But as for happiness, he that has once had communion with his Maker must be more frantic than ever I was yet, if he can dream of finding it at a distance from Him. I no more expect happiness at Weston than here, or than I should expect it, in company with felons and outlaws, in the hold of a ballast-lighter. Animal spirits, however, have their value, and are especially desirable to him who is condemned to carry a burthen, which at any rate will tire him, but which, without their aid, cannot fail to crush him. The dealings of God with me are to myself utterly unintelligible. I have never met, either in books or in conversation, with an experience at all similar to my own. More than a twelvemonth has passed since I began to hope that, having walked the whole breadth of the bottom of this Red Sea, I was beginning to climb the opposite shore, and I prepared to sing the song of Moses. But I have been disappointed: those hopes have been blasted; those comforts have been wrested from me. I could not be so duped, even by the arch-enemy himself, as to be made to question the divine nature of them; but I have been made to believe (which, you will say, is being duped still more) that God gave them to me in derision, and took them away in vengeance. Such, however, is, and has been my persuasion many a long day; and when I shall think on that subject more comfortably, or, as you will be inclined to tell me, more rationally and scripturally, I know not. In the mean time, I embrace with alacrity every alleviation of my case, and with the more alacrity, because, whatsoever proves a relief of my distress, is a cordial to Mrs. Unwin, whose sympathy with me, through the whole of it, has been such, that, despair excepted, her burthen

has been as heavy as mine. Lady Hesketh, by her affectionate behaviour, the cheerfulness of her conversation, and the constant sweetness of her temper, has cheered us both; and Mrs. Unwin not less than me. By her help we get change of air and of scene, though still resident at Olney; and by her means, have intercourse with some families in this country, with whom, but for her, we could never have been acquainted. Her presence here would, at any time, even in my happiest days, have been a comfort to me; but, in the present day, I am doubly sensible of its value. She leaves nothing unsaid, nothing undone, that she thinks will be conducive to our well-being; and, so far as she is concerned, I have nothing to wish, but that I could believe her sent hither in mercy to myself,—then I should be thankful.

I am, my dear friend, with Mrs. Unwin's love to Mrs. N. and yourself, hers and yours, as ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 30, 1786.

No length of separation will ever make us indifferent either to your pleasures or your pains. We rejoice that you have had so agreeable a jaunt, and (excepting Mrs. Newton's terrible fall, from which, however, we are happy to find that she received so little injury,) a safe return. We, who live always encompassed by rural scenery, can afford to be stationary; though we ourselves, were I not too closely engaged with Homer, should perhaps follow your example, and seek a little refreshment from variety and change of place,—a course that we might find not only agreeable, but, after a sameness of

thirteen years, perhaps useful. You must, undoubtedly, have found your excursion beneficial, who at all other times endure, if not so close a confinement as we, yet a more unhealthy one, in city air, and in the centre of continual engagements.

Your letter to Mrs. Unwin, concerning our conduct and the offence taken at it in our neighbourhood, gave us both a great deal of concern; and she is still deeply affected by it. Of this you may assure yourself, that if our friends in London have been grieved, they have been misinformed; which is the more probable, because the bearers of intelligence hence to London are not always very scrupulous concerning the truth of their reports; and that if any of our serious neighbours have been astonished, they have been so without the smallest real occasion. Poor people are never well employed even when they judge one another; but when they undertake to scan the motives and estimate the behaviour of those whom Providence has exalted a little above them, they are utterly out of their province and their depth. They often see us get into Lady Hesketh's carriage, and rather uncharitably suppose that it always carries us into a scene of dissipation, which, in fact, it never does. We visit, indeed, at Mr. Throckmorton's, and at Gayhurst; rarely, however, at Gayhurst, on account of the greater distance: more frequently, though not very frequently, at Weston, both because it is nearer, and because our business in the house that is making ready for us often calls us that way. The rest of our journeys are to Beaujeat turnpike and back again; or, perhaps, to the cabinet-maker's at Newport. As Othello says,

The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more.

What good we can get or can do in these visits, is another

question; which they, I am sure, are not at all qualified to solve. Of this we are both sure, that under the guidance of Providence we have formed these connexions; that we should have hurt the Christian cause, rather than have served it, by a prudish abstinence from them; and that St. Paul himself, conducted to them as we have been, would have found it expedient to have done as we have done. It is always impossible to conjecture, to much purpose, from the beginnings of a providence, in what it will terminate. If we have neither received nor communicated any spiritual good at present, while conversant with our new acquaintance, at least no harm has befallen on either side; and it were too hazardous an assertion even for our censorious neighbours to make, that, because the cause of the Gospel does not appear to have been served at present, therefore it never can be in any future intercourse that we may have with them. In the mean time I speak a strict truth, and as in the sight of God, when I say that we are neither of us at all more addicted to gadding than heretofore. We both naturally love seclusion from company, and never go into it without putting a force upon our disposition; at the same time I will confess, and you will easily conceive, that the melancholy incident to such close confinement as we have so long endured, finds itself a little relieved by such amusements as a society so innocent affords. You may look round the Christian world, and find few, I believe, of our station, who have so little intercourse as we with the world that is not Christian.

We place all the uneasiness that you have felt for us upon this subject, to the account of that cordial friendship of which you have long given us proof. But you may be assured, that notwithstanding all rumours to the contrary, we are exactly what we were when you saw us last:—I, miserable on account of God's departure from me, which I believe to be final; and she,

seeking his return to me in the path of duty, and by continual prayer.

Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

My usual time of answering your letters having been unavoidably engrossed by occasions that would not be thrust aside, I have been obliged to postpone the payment of my debt for a whole week. Even now it is not without some difficulty that I discharge it; which you will easily believe, when I tell you that this is only the second day that has seen us inhabitants of our new abode. When God speaks to a chaos, it becomes a scene of order and harmony in a moment; but when his creatures have thrown one house into confusion by leaving it, and another by tumbling themselves and their goods into it, not less than many days' labour and contrivance is necessary to give them their proper places. And it belongs to furniture of all kinds, however convenient it may be in its place, to be a nuisance out of it. We find ourselves here in a comfortable dwelling. Such it is in itself; and my cousin, who has spared no expense in dressing it up for us, has made it a genteel one. Such, at least, it will be when its contents are a little harmonized. She left us on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, in the evening, Mrs. Unwin and I took possession. I could not help giving a last look to my old prison and its precincts; and though I cannot easily account for it, having been miserable there so many years, felt something like a heart-ache when I took my last leave of a scene, that certainly in itself had nothing to en

gave affection. But I recollected that I had once been happy there, and could not, without tears in my eyes, bid adieu to a place in which God had so often found me. The human mind is a great mystery ; mine, at least, appeared to me to be such upon this occasion. I found that I not only had a tenderness for that ruinous abode, because it had once known me happy in the presence of God ; but that even the distress I had suffered for so long a time, on account of his absence, had endeared it to me as much. I was weary of every object, had long wished for a change, yet could not take leave without a pang at parting. What consequences are to attend our removal, God only knows. I know well that it is not in situation to effect a cure of melancholy like mine. The change, however, has been entirely a providential one ; for, much as I wished it, I never uttered that wish, except to Mrs. Unwin. When I learned that the house was to be let, and had seen it, I had a strong desire that Lady Hesketh should take it for herself, if she should happen to like the country. That desire, indeed, is not exactly fulfilled ; and yet, upon the whole, is exceeded. We are the tenants ; but she assures us that we shall often have her for a guest ; and here is room enough for us all. You, I hope, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton, will want no assurances to convince you that you will always be received here with the sincerest welcome. More welcome than you have been, you cannot be ; but better accommodated you may and will be.

Adieu, my dear friend. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances and mine conclude me ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 16, 1786.

The death of one whom I valued as I did Mr. Unwin, is a subject on which I could say much, and with much feeling. But habituated as my mind has been these many years to melancholy themes, I am glad to excuse myself the contemplation of them as much as possible. I will only observe, that the death of so young a man, whom I so lately saw in good health, and whose life was so desirable on every account, has something in it peculiarly distressing. I cannot think of the widow and the children he has left, without an heart-ache that I remember not to have felt before. We may well say, that the ways of God are mysterious: in truth they are so, and to a degree that only such events can give us any conception of. Mrs. Unwin begs me to give her love to you, with thanks for your kind letter. Her's has been so much a life of affliction, that whatever occurs to her in that shape has not, at least, the terrors of novelty to embitter it. She is supported under this, as she has been under a thousand others, with a submission of which I never saw her deprived for a moment.

Once, since we left Olney, I had occasion to call at our old dwelling; and never did I see so forlorn and woeful a spectacle. Deserted of its inhabitants, it seemed as if it could never be dwelt in for ever. The coldness of it, the dreariness, and the dirt, made me think it no unapt resemblance of a soul that God has forsaken. While he dwelt in it, and manifested himself there, he could create his own accommodations, and give it occasionally the appearance of a palace; but the moment he withdraws, and takes with him all the furniture and embellishment of his graces, it becomes what it was before he entered it—the

habitation of vermin, and the image of desolation. Sometimes I envy the living, but not much or not long; for while they live, as we call it, they are too liable to desertion. But the dead who have died in the lord, I envy always; for they, I take it for granted, can be no more forsaken.

This Babylon, however, that we have left behind us, ruinous as it is, the ceilings cracked and the walls crumbling, still finds some who covet it. A shoemaker and an alemonger, have proposed themselves as joint candidates to succeed us. Some small difference between them and the landlord, on the subject of rent, has hitherto kept them out; but at last they will probably agree. In the mean time Mr. R—— prophesies its fall, and tells them that they will occupy it at the hazard of their lives, unless it be well propped before they enter it. We have not, therefore, left it much too soon; and this we knew before we migrated, though the same prophet would never speak out, so long as only our heads were in danger.

I wish you well through your laborious task of transcribing. I hope the good lady's meditations are such as amuse you rather more, while you copy them, than meditations in general would; which, for the most part, have appeared to me the most labour-ed, insipid, and unnatural of all productions.

Adieu my dear friend. Our love attends you both.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 13, 1787.

It gave me pleasure, such as it was, to learn by a letter from Mr. H. Thornton, that the Inscription for the tomb of poor

Unwin has been approved of. The dead have nothing to do with human praises; but if they died in the Lord, they have abundant praises to render to him; which is far better. The dead, whatever they leave behind them, have nothing to regret. Good Christians are the only creatures in the world that are truly good; and them they will see again, and see them improved: therefore them they regret not. Regret is for the living. What we get, we soon lose; and what we lose, we regret. The most obvious consolation in this case seems to be, that we who regret others, shall quickly become objects of regret ourselves; for mankind are continually passing off in a rapid succession.

I have many kind friends, who, like yourself, wish that, instead of turning my endeavours to a translation of Homer, I had proceeded in the way of original poetry. But I can truly say that it was ordered otherwise, not by me, but by the Providence that governs all my thoughts, and directs my intentions as he pleases. It may seem strange, but it is true, that after having written a volume, in general with great ease to myself, I found it impossible to write another page. The mind of man is not a fountain, but a cistern; and mine, God knows, a broken one. It is my creed, that the intellect depends as much, both for the energy and the multitude of its exertions, upon the operations of *God's* agency upon it, as the heart, for the exercise of its graces, upon the influence of the Holy Spirit. According to this persuasion, I may very reasonably affirm, that it was not God's pleasure that I should proceed in the same track, because he did not enable me to do it. A whole year I waited, and waited in circumstances of mind that made a state of non-employment peculiarly irksome to me. I longed for the pen, as the only remedy, but I could find no subject: extreme

distress of spirit at last drove me, as, if I mistake not, I told you some time since, to lay Homer before me, and translate for amusement. Why it pleased God that I should be hunted into such a business, of such enormous length and labour, by miseries for which He did not see good to afford me any other remedy, I know not. But so it was; and jejune as the consolation may be, and unsuited to the exigencies of a mind that once was spiritual, yet a thousand times have I been glad of it; for a thousand times it has served at least to divert my attention, in some degree, from such terrible tempests as I believe have seldom been permitted to beat upon a human mind. Let my friends, therefore, who wish me some little measure of tranquillity in the performance of the most turbulent voyage that ever Christian mariner made, be contented, that, having Homer's mountains and forests to windward, I escape, under their shelter, from the force of many a gust that would almost upset me; especially when they consider that, not by choice, but by necessity, I make *them* my refuge. As to fame, and honour, and glory, that may be acquired by poetical feats of any sort, God knows, that if I could lay me down in my grave with hope at my side, or sit with hope at my side in a dungeon all the residue of my days, I would cheerfully wave them all. For the little fame that I have already earned has never saved me from one distressing night, or from one despairing day, since I first acquired it. *For* what I am reserved, or *to* what, is a mystery; I would fain hope, not merely that I may amuse others, or only to be a translator of Homer.

Sally Perry's case has given us much concern. I have no doubt that it is distemper. But distresses of mind, that are occasioned by distemper, are the most difficult of all to deal with. They refuse all consolation; they will hear no reason. God only, by his own immediate impressions, can remove them;

as, after an experience of thirteen years' misery, I can abundantly testify.

Yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Weston Underwood, Oct. 2, 1787.

After a long but necessary interruption of our correspondence, I return to it again, in one respect, at least, better qualified for it than before; I mean by a belief of your identity, which for thirteen years I did not believe. The acquisition of this light, if light it may be called which leaves me as much in the dark as ever on the most interesting subjects, releases me however from the disagreeable suspicion that I am addressing myself to you as the friend whom I loved and valued so highly in my better days, while in fact you are not that friend, but a stranger. I can now write to you without seeming to act a part, and without having any need to charge myself with dissimulation;—a charge from which, in that state of mind and under such an uncomfortable persuasion, I knew not how to exculpate myself; and which, as you will easily conceive, not seldom made my correspondence with you a burthen. Still, indeed, it wants, and is likely to want, that best ingredient which can alone make it truly pleasant either to myself or you—that spirituality which once enlivened all our intercourse. You will tell me, no doubt, that the knowledge I have gained is an earnest of more and more valuable information, and that the dispersion of the clouds in part, promises, in due time, their complete dispersion. I should be happy to believe it; but the power to do so is at present far from me. Never was the

mind of man benighted to the degree that mine has been. The storms that have assailed me would have upset the faith of every man that ever had any; and the very remembrance of them, even after they have been long passed by, makes hope impossible.

Mrs. Unwin, whose poor bark is still held together, though shattered by being tossed and agitated so long at the side of mine, does not forget yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness on this last occasion. Mrs. Newton's offer to come to her assistance, and your readiness to have rendered us the same service, could you have hoped for any salutary effect of your presence, neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself undervalue, nor shall presently forget. But you judged right when you supposed, that even your company would have been no relief to me; the company of my father or my brother, could they have returned from the dead to visit me, would have been none to me.

We are busied in preparing for the reception of Lady Hesketh, whom we expect here shortly. We have beds to put up, and furniture for beds to make; workmen, and scouring, and bustle. Mrs. Unwin's time has, of course, been lately occupied to a degree that made writing to her impracticable; and she excused herself the rather, knowing my intentions to take her office. It does not, however, suit me to write much at a time. This last tempest has left my nerves in a worse condition than it found them; my head, especially, though better informed, is more infirm than ever. I will, therefore, only add our joint love to yourself and Mrs. Newton, and that I am, my dear friend,

Your affectionate

W. C.*

* This letter was addressed to Mr. Newton, on the writer's recovery from an attack of his grievous constitutional malady, which lasted eight months.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 20, 1787.

My indisposition could not be of a worse kind. Had I been afflicted with a fever, or confined by a broken bone, neither of these cases would have made it impossible that we should meet. I am truly sorry that the impediment was insurmountable while it lasted, for such in fact it was. The sight of any face, except Mrs. Unwin's, was to me an insupportable grievance; and when it has happened that by *forcing* himself into my hiding place, some friend has found me out, he has had no great cause to exult in his success, as Mr. Bull can tell you. From this dreadful condition of mind, I emerged suddenly; so suddenly, that Mrs. Unwin, having no notice of such a change herself, could give none to any body; and when it obtained, how long it might last, or how far it was to be depended on, was a matter of the greatest uncertainty. It affects me on the recollection with the more concern, because I learn from your last, that I have not only lost an interview with you myself, but have stood in the way of visits that you would have gladly paid to others, and who would have been happy to have seen you. You should have forgotten (but you are not good at forgetting your friends) that such a creature as myself existed.

I rejoice that Mrs. Cowper has been so comfortably supported. She must have severely felt the loss of her son. She has an affectionate heart toward her children, and could not but be sensible of the bitterness of such a cup. But God's presence sweetens every bitter. Desertion is the only evil that a Christian cannot bear.

I have done a deed for which I find some people thank me little. Perhaps I have only burned my fingers, and had better

not have meddled. Last Sunday se'nnight, I drew up a petition to Lord Dartmouth, in behalf of Mr. Postlethwaite. We signed it, and all the principal inhabitants of Weston followed our example. What we had done was soon known in Olney, and an evening or two ago, Mr. R—— called here, to inform me (for that seemed to be his errand,) how little the measure that I had taken was relished by some of his neighbours. I vindicated my proceeding on the principles of justice and mercy to a laborious and well-deserving minister, to whom I had the satisfaction to find that none could allege one serious objection, and that all, except one, who objected at all, are persons who in reality ought to have no vote upon such a question. The affair seems still to remain undecided. If his Lordship waits, which I a little suspect, till his steward shall have taken the sense of those with whom he is likely to converse upon the subject, and means to be determined by his report, Mr. Postlethwaite's case is desperate.

I beg that you will remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon. We rejoice in Mrs. Newton's amended health, and when we can hear that she is restored, shall rejoice still more. The next summer may prove more propitious to us than the past: if it should, we shall be happy to receive you and yours. Mr. Unwin unites with me in love to you all three. She is tolerably well, and her writing was prevented by nothing but her expectation that I should soon do it myself.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 21, 1788.

Your last letter informed us that you were likely to be much occupied for some time in writing on a subject that must be interesting to a person of your feelings—the Slave Trade. I was unwilling to interrupt your progress in so good a work, and have therefore enjoined myself a longer silence than I should otherwise have thought excusable; though, to say the truth, did not our once intimate fellowship in the things of God, recur to my remembrance, and present me with something like a warrant for doing it, I should hardly prevail with myself to write at all. Letters, such as mine, to a person of a character such as yours, are like snow in harvest; and you well say, that if I will send you a letter that you can answer, I shall make your part of the business easier than it is. This I would gladly do; but though I abhor a vacuum as much as nature herself is said to do, yet a vacuum I am bound to feel of all such matter as may merit your perusal.

I expected that before this time I should have had the pleasure of seeing your friend Mr. Bean,* but his stay in this country was so short, that it was hardly possible he should find an opportunity to call. I have not only heard a high character of that gentleman from yourself, whose opinion of men, as well as of other matters, weighs more with me than any body's; but from two or three different persons likewise, not ill qualified to judge. From all that I have heard, both from you and them, I have every reason to expect that I shall find him both an agreeable and useful neighbour; and if he can be content with me, (for

* Formerly Vicar of Olney, and now one of the Librarians of the British Museum.

that seems doubtful, poet as I am, and now, alas! nothing more,) it seems certain that I shall be highly satisfied with him.

Here is much shifting and changing of ministers. Two are passing away, and two are stepping into the places. Mr. B——, I suppose, whom I know not, is almost upon the wing; and Mr. P——, with whom I have not been very much acquainted, is either, going or gone. A Mr. C—— is come to occupy, for the present at least, the place of the former; and if he can possess himself of the two curacies of Ravenstone and Weston, will, I imagine, take up his abode here. Having, as I understand, no engagements elsewhere, he will doubtless be happy to obtain a lasting one in this country. What acceptance he finds among the people of Ravenstone I have not heard, but at Olney, where he has preached once, he was hailed as the Sun by the Greenlanders after half a year of lamp-light.

Providence interposed to preserve me from the heaviest affliction that I can now suffer, or I had lately lost Mrs. Unwin, and in a way the most shocking imaginable. Having kindled her fire in the room where she dresses, (an office that she always performs for herself,) she placed the candle on the hearth, and kneeling addressed herself to her devotions. A thought struck her, while thus occupied, that the candle being short might possibly catch her clothes. She pinched it out with the tongs, and set it on the table. In a few minutes the chamber was so filled with smoke, that her eyes watered, and it was hardly possible to see across it. Supposing that it proceeded from the chimney, she pushed the billets backward, and while she did so, casting her eye downward, perceived that her dress was on fire. In fact, before she extinguished the candle, the mischief that she apprehended was begun; and when she related the matter to me, she showed me her clothes with a hole burnt in them as large as this sheet of paper. It is not possible, perhaps, that so tragi-

that a death should overtake a person actually engaged in prayer, for her escape seems almost a miracle. Her presence of mind, by which she was enabled, without calling for help or waiting for it, to gather up her clothes and plunge them, burning as they were, in water, seems as wonderful a part of the occurrence as any. The very report of fire, though distant, has rendered hundreds torpid and incapable of self-succour; how much more was such a disability to be expected, when the fire had not seized a neighbour's house, or begun its devastations on our own, but was actually consuming the apparel that she wore, and seemed in possession of her person.

It draws toward supper-time. I therefore heartily wish you a good night; and with our best affections to yourself, Mrs. Newton, and Miss Catlett, I remain, my dear friend, truly and warmly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING,
PERTON HALL, NEAR KIMBOLTON, HUNTS.

DEAR MADAM,

Weston Lodge, Feb. 12, 1788.

A letter from a lady who was once intimate with my brother, could not fail of being the most acceptable to me. I lost him just in the moment when those truths which have recommended my volumes to your approbation, were become his daily sustenance, as they had long been mine. But the will of God was done. I have sometimes thought that had his life been spared, being made brothers by a stricter tie than ever in the bonds of the same faith, hope, and love, we should have been happier in each other than it was in the power of mere natural

affection to make us. But it was his blessing to be taken from a world in which he had no longer any wish to continue, and it will be mine, if while I dwell in it, my time may not be altogether wasted. In order to effect that good end, I wrote what I am happy to find it has given you pleasure to read. But for that pleasure, Madam, you are indebted neither to me nor to my Muse ; but (as you are well aware) to Him who alone can make divine truths palatable, in whatever vehicle conveyed. It is an established philosophical axiom, that nothing can communicate what it has not in itself ; but in the effects of Christian communion, a very strong exception is found to this general rule, however self-evident it may seem. A man himself destitute of all spiritual consolation, may, by occasion, impart it to others. Thus I, it seems, who wrote those very poems to amuse a mind oppressed with melancholy, and who have myself derived from them no other benefit, (for mere success in authorship will do me no good,) have nevertheless, by so doing, comforted others, at the same time that they administer to me no consolation. But I will proceed no farther in this strain, lest my prose should damp a pleasure that my verse has happily excited. On the contrary, I will endeavour to rejoice in your joy, and especially because I have been myself the instrument of conveying it.

Since the receipt of your obliging letter, I have naturally had recourse to my recollection to try if it would furnish me with the name that I find at the bottom of it. At the same time, I am aware that there is nothing more probable than that my brother might be honoured with your friendship without mentioning it to me ; for except a very short period before his death, we lived necessarily at a considerable distance from each other. Ascribe it, Madam, not to an impertinent curiosity, but to a

desire of better acquaintance with you, if I take the liberty to ask (since ladies' names, at least, are changeable,) whether yours was at that time the same as now.

Sincerely wishing you all happiness, and especially that which I am sure you covet most, the happiness which is from above, I remain, dear Madam—early as it may seem to say it,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.



TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 1, 1788.

That my letters may not be exactly an echo to those which I receive, I seldom read a letter immediately before I answer it; trusting to my memory to suggest to me such of its contents as may call for particular notice. Thus I dealt with your last, which lay in my desk, while I was writing to you. But my memory, or rather my recollection, failed me, in that instance. I had not forgotten Mr. Bean's letter, nor my obligations to you for the communication of it: but they did not happen to present themselves to me, in the proper moment, nor till some hours after my own had been dispatched. I now return it, with many thanks for so favourable a specimen of its author. That he is a good man, and a wise man, its testimony proves sufficiently; and I doubt not, that when he shall speak for himself, he will be found an agreeable one. For it is possible to be very good, and, in many respects, very wise; yet, at the same time, not the most delightful companion. Excuse the shortness of an occasional scratch, which I send in much haste; and believe me, my dear friend, with our united love to

yourself and Mrs. Newton, of whose health we hope to hear a more favourable account, as the year rises,

Your truly affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV..JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 3, 1788.*

I had not, as you may imagine, read more than two or three lines of the enclosed, before I perceived that I had accidentally come to the possession of another man's property; who, by the same misadventure, has doubtless occupied mine. I accordingly folded it again the moment after having opened it, and now return it. The bells of Olney both last night and this morning have announced the arrival of Mr. Bean. I understand that he is now come with his family. It will not be long, therefore, before we shall be acquainted. I rather wish than hope that he may find himself comfortably situated; but the parishioners' admiration of Mr. C—, whatever the bells may say, is no good omen. It is hardly to be expected that the same people should admire both.

I have lately been engaged in a correspondence with a lady whom I never saw. She lives at Perten-Hall, near Kimbolton, and is the wife of a Dr. King, who has the living. She is evidently a Christian, and a very gracious one. I would that she had you for a correspondent rather than me. One letter from you would do her more good than a ream of mine. But so it is; and since I cannot depute my office to you, and am bound

* The date having been probably written on the latter half of this letter, which is torn off, the editor has endeavoured to supply it from the following to Mrs. King, and the next to Mrs. Newton.

by all sorts of considerations to answer her this evening, I must necessarily quit you that I may have time to do it.

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

March 3, 1788.

I owe you many acknowledgments, dear Madam, for that unreserved communication both of your history and of your sentiments, with which you favoured me in your last. It gives me great pleasure to learn that you are so happily circumstanced, both in respect of situation and frame of mind. With your view of religious subjects, you could not indeed, speaking properly, be pronounced unhappy in any circumstances; but to have received from above not only that faith which reconciles the heart to affliction, but many outward comforts also, and especially that greatest of all earthly comforts, a comfortable home, is happiness indeed. May you long enjoy it! As to health or sickness, you have learned already their true value, and know well that the former is no blessing, unless it be sanctified, and that the latter is one of the greatest we can receive, when we are enabled to make a proper use of it.

There is nothing in my story that can possibly be worth your knowledge; yet, lest I should seem to treat you with a reserve which, at your hands, I have not experienced, such as it is, I will relate it.—I was bred to the law; a profession to which I was never much inclined, and in which I engaged rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father, than because I had any hope of success in it, myself. I spent twelve years in the Temple, where I made no progress in that science; to cultivate which I was sent thither. During this time my fa-

ther died. Not long after him, died my mother-in-law, and at the expiration of it, a melancholy seized me, which obliged me to quit London, and consequently to renounce the bar. I lived some time at St. Albans. After having suffered in that place long and extreme affliction, the storm was suddenly dispelled, and the same day-spring from on high which has arisen upon you, arose on me also. I spent eight years in the enjoyment of it, and have ever since the expiration of these eight years, been occasionally the prey of the same melancholy as at first. In the depths of it I wrote the Task, and the volume which preceded it; and in the same deeps I am now translating Homer. But to return to St. Albans. I abode there a year and a half. Thence I went to Cambridge, where I spent a short time with my brother, in whose neighbourhood I determined, if possible, to pass the remainder of my days. He soon found a lodging for me at Huntingdon. At that place I had not resided long, when I was led to an intimate connexion with a family of the name of Unwin. I soon quitted my lodging, and took up my abode with them. I had not lived long under their roof, when Mr. Unwin, as he was riding one Sunday morning to his cure at Gravelly, was thrown from his horse; of which fall he died. Mrs. Unwin having the same views of the gospel as myself, and being desirous of attending a purer ministration of it than was to be found at Huntingdon, removed to Olney, where Mr. Newton was at that time the preacher, and I with her. There we continued till Mr. Newton, whose family was the only one in the place with which we could have a connexion, and with whom we lived always on the most intimate terms, left it. After his departure, finding the situation no longer desirable, and our house threatening to fall upon our heads, we removed hither. Here we have a good house in a most beautiful village, and, for the greatest part of the year, a most agreeable neigh-

bourhood. Like you, Madam, I stay much at home, and have not travelled twenty miles from this place and its environs, more than once these twenty years.

All this I have written, not for the singularity of the matter, as you will perceive, but partly for the reason which I gave at the outset, and partly that, seeing we are become correspondents, we may know as much of each other as we can, and that as soon as possible.

I beg, Madam, that you will present my best respects to Mr. King, whom, together with yourself, should you at any time hereafter take wing for a longer flight than usual, we shall be happy to receive at Weston, and believe me, dear Madam, his and your obliged and affectionate,

W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

MY DEAR MADAM,

March 17, 1788.

A thousand thanks to you for your obliging and most acceptable present, which I received safe this evening. Had you known my occasions, you could not possibly have timed it more exactly. The Throckmorton family, who live in our neighbourhood, and who sometimes take a dinner with us, were, by engagement made with them two or three days ago, appointed to dine with us just at the time when your turkey will be in perfection. A turkey from Wargrave, the residence of my friend, and a turkey, as I conclude, of your breeding, stands a fair chance, in my account, to excel all other turkeys; and the ham, its companion, will be no less welcome.

I shall be happy to hear that my friend Joseph has recovered entirely from his late indisposition, which I was informed was

gout; a distemper which, however painful in itself, brings at least some comfort with it, both for the patient and those who love him, the hope of length of days, and an exemption from numerous other evils. I wish him just so much of it as may serve for a confirmation of this hope, and not one twinge more.

Your husband, my dear Madam, told me, some time since, that a certain library of mine, concerning which I have heard no other tidings these five and twenty years, is still in being. Hue and cry have been made after it in Old Palace Yard, but hitherto in vain. If he can inform a bookless student in what region or in what nook his long-lost volumes may be found, he will render me an important service.

I am likely to be furnished soon with shelves, which my cousin of New Norfolk-street is about to send me; but furniture for these shelves I shall not presently procure, unless by recovering my stray authors. I am not young enough to think of making a new collection, and shall probably possess myself of few books hereafter but such as I may put forth myself, which cost me nothing but what I can better spare than money—time and consideration.

I beg, my dear Madam, that you will give my love to my friend, and believe me, with the warmest sense of his and your kindness,

Your most obliged
and affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 17, 1788.

The evening is almost worn away, while I have been writing a letter, to which I was obliged to give immediate attention. An application from a lady, and backed by you, could not be less than irresistible. That lady, too, a daughter of Mr. Thornton's. Neither are these words of course : since I returned to Homer in good earnest, I turn out of my way for no consideration that I can possibly put aside.

With modern tunes I am unacquainted, and have therefore accommodated my verse to an old one ; not so old, however, but that there will be songsters found old enough to remember it. The song is an admirable one for which it was made, and, though political, nearly, if not quite, as serious as mine. On such a subject as I had before me, it seems impossible not to be serious. I shall be happy if it meet with your and Lady Balgonie's approbation.

Of Mr. Bean I could say much ; but have only time at present, to say that I esteem and love him. On some future occasion I shall speak of him more at large.

We rejoice that Mrs. Newton is better, and wish nothing more than her complete recovery. Dr. Ford is to be pitied. His wife, I suppose, is going to heaven ; a journey which she can better afford to take, than he to part with her.

I am, my dear friend, with our united love to you all three,
most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

DEAR MADAM,

April 11, 1788.

The melancholy that I have mentioned, and concerning which you are so kind as to enquire, is of a kind, so far as I know, peculiar to myself. It does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it, whether serious or ludicrous, or whatsoever it may be; for which reason I am almost always employed either in reading or writing when I am not engaged in conversation. A vacant hour is my abhorrence; because, when I am not occupied, I suffer under the whole influence of my unhappy temperament. I thank you for your recommendation of a medicine from which you have received benefit yourself; but there is hardly any thing that I have not proved, however beneficial it may have been found by others, in my own case utterly useless. I have, therefore, long since bid adieu to all hope from human means,—the means excepted of perpetual employment.

I will not say that we shall never meet, because it is not for a creature, who knows not what shall be to-morrow, to assert any thing positively concerning the future. Things more unlikely I have yet seen brought to pass, and things which, if I had expressed myself of them at all, I should have said were impossible. But being respectively circumstanced as we are, there seems no present probability of it. You speak of insuperable hindrances; and I also have hindrances that would be equally difficult to surmount. One is, that I never ride, that I am not able to perform a journey on foot, and that chaises do not roll within the sphere of that economy which my circumstances oblige me to observe. If this were not of itself sufficient to excuse me, when I decline so obliging an invitation as yours,

I could mention yet other obstacles. But to what end? One impracticability makes as effectual a barrier as a thousand. It will be otherwise in other worlds. Either we shall not bear about us a body, or it will be more easily transportable than this. In the mean time, by the help of the post, strangers to each other may cease to be such, as you and I have already begun to experience.

It is indeed, Madam, as you say, a foolish world, and likely to continue such till the Great Teacher shall himself vouchsafe to make it wiser. I am persuaded that time alone will never mend it. But there is doubtless a day appointed when there shall be a more general manifestation of the beauty of holiness than mankind have ever yet beheld. When that period shall arrive, there will be an end of profane representations, whether of Heaven or Hell, on the stage:—the great realities will supersede them.

I have just discovered that I have written to you on paper so transparent, that it will hardly keep the contents a secret. Excuse the mistake, and believe me, *déar Madam*, with my respects to Mr. King,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 19, 1788.

I thank you for your last, and for the verses in particular, therein contained; in which there is not only rhyme but reason. And yet I fear that neither you nor I, with all our reasoning and rhyming, shall effect much good in this matter. So far as I can learn, and I have had intelligence from a quarter

within the reach of such as is respectable, our Governors are not animated altogether with such heroic ardour as the occasion might inspire. They consult frequently, indeed, in the Cabinet about it ; but the frequency of their consultations in a case so plain as this would be, (did not what Shakspeare calls commodity, and what we call political expediency, cast a cloud over it,) rather bespeaks a desire to save appearances, than to interpose to purpose. Laws will, I suppose, be enacted for the more humane treatment of the negroes ; but who shall see to the execution of them ? The planters will not, and the negroes cannot. In fact we know, that laws of this tendency have not been wanting, enacted even amongst themselves ; but there has been always a want of prosecutors, or righteous judges ; deficiencies, which will not be very easily supplied. The newspapers have lately told us, that these merciful masters have, on this occasion, been occupied in passing ordinances, by which the lives and limbs of their slaves are to be secured from wanton cruelty hereafter. But who does not immediately detect the artifice, or can give them a moment's credit for any thing more than a design, by this show of lenity, to avert the storm which they think hangs over them. On the whole, I fear there is reason to wish, for the honour of England, that the nuisance had never been troubled ; lest we eventually make ourselves justly chargeable with the whole offence by not removing it. The enormity cannot be palliated ; we can no longer plead that we were not aware of it, or that our attention was otherwise engaged ; and shall be inexcusable, therefore, ourselves, if we leave the least part of it unredressed. Such arguments as Pharaoh might have used, to justify his destruction of the Israelites, substituting only sugar for bricks, may lie ready for our use also ; but I think we can find no better.

We are tolerably well, and shall rejoice to hear that, as the

year rises, Mrs. Newton's health keeps pace with it. Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately and truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 25, 1788.

Ask possibilities and they shall be performed, but ask not hymns from a man suffering by despair as I do. I could not sing the Lord's song were it to save my life, banished as I am, not to a strange land, but to a remoteness from his presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is no distance, is vicinity and cohesion. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me; least of all can I venture to use the language of absolute resignation, lest, only counterfeiting, I should for that very reason be taken strictly at my word, and lose all my remaining comfort. Can there not be found among those translations of Madame Guyon, somewhat that might serve the purpose? I should think there might. Submission to the will of Christ, my memory tells me, is a theme that pervades them all. If so, your request is performed already; and if any alteration in them should be necessary, I will with all my heart make it. I have no objection to giving the graces of the foreigner an English dress, but insuperable ones to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel.

Hoping that you will have the grace to be resigned most perfectly to this disappointment, which you should not have suf-

ferred, had it been in my power to prevent it, I remain, with our best remembrances to Mr. Thornton,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 5, 1788.

It is a comfort to me that you are so kind as to make allowance for me, in consideration of my being so busy a man. The truth is, that could I write with both hands, and with both at the same time, verse with one and prose with the other, I should not even so be able to dispatch both my poetry and my arrears of correspondence faster than I have need. The only opportunities that I can find for conversing with distant friends, are in the early hour (and that sometimes reduced to half a one) before breakfast. Neither am I exempt from hindrances, which, while they last, are insurmountable; especially one, by which I have been occasionally a sufferer all my life. I mean an inflammation of the eyes; a malady under which I have lately laboured, and from which I am at this moment only in a small degree relieved. The last sudden change of the weather, from heat almost insupportable to a cold as severe as is commonly felt in mid-winter, would have disabled me entirely for all sorts of scribbling, had I not favoured the weak part a little, and given my eyes a respite.

It is certain that we do not live far from Olney, but, small as the distance is, it has too often the effect of a separation between the Beans and us. He is a man with whom, when I can converse at all, I can converse on terms perfectly agreeable to myself; who does not distress me with forms, nor yet disgust

me by the neglect of them ; whose manners are easy and natural, and his observations always sensible. I often, therefore, wish them nearer neighbours.

We have heard nothing of the Powleys since they left us, a fortnight ago ; and should be uneasy at their silence on such an occasion, did we not know that she cannot write, and that he, on his first return to his parish after a long absence, may possibly find it difficult. Her we found much improved in her health and spirits, and him, as always, affectionate and obliging. It was an agreeable visit, and as it was ordered for me, I happened to have better spirits than I have enjoyed at any time since.

I shall rejoice if your friend Mr. Philips, influenced by what you told him of my present engagements, shall waive his application to me for a poem on the slave-trade. I account myself honoured by his intention to solicit me on the subject, and it would give me pain to refuse him, which inevitably I shall be constrained to do. The more I have considered it, the more I have convinced myself that it is not a promising theme for verse. General censure on the iniquity of the practice will avail nothing. The world has been overwhelmed with such remarks already, and to particularize all the horrors of it were an employment for the mind both of the poet and his readers, of which they would necessarily soon grow weary. For my own part, I cannot contemplate the subject very nearly, without a degree of abhorrence that affects my spirits, and sinks them below the pitch requisite for success in verse. Lady Hesketh recommended it to me some months since, and then I declined it for these reasons, and for others which need not be mentioned here.

I return you many thanks for all your intelligence concerning the success of the gospel in far countries, and shall rejoice in a

sight of Mr. Van Lier's letter, which, being so voluminous, I think you should bring with you, when you can take your flight to Weston, rather than commit to any other conveyance.

Remember that it is now summer, and that the summer flies fast, and that we shall be happy to see you and yours, as speedily and for as long a time as you can afford. We are sorry, truly so, that Mrs. Newton is so frequently and so much indisposed. Accept our best love to you both, and believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

After what I have said on the subject of my writing engagements, I doubt not but you will excuse my transcribing the verses to Mrs. Montague, especially considering that my eyes are weary with what I have written this morning already. I feel somewhat like an impropriety in referring you to the next Gentleman's Magazine; but at the present juncture I know not how to do better.



TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

June 19, 1788.

You must think me a tardy correspondent, unless you have had charity enough for me to suppose that I have met with other hindrances than those of indolence and inattention. With these I cannot charge myself, for I am never idle by choice; and inattentive to you I certainly have not been; but, on the contrary, can safely affirm that every day I have thought on you. My silence has been occasioned by a malady to which I have all

my life been subject—an inflammation of the eyes. The last sudden change of weather, from excessive heat to a wintry degree of cold, occasioned it, and at the same time gave me a pinch of the rheumatic kind; from both which disorders I have but just recovered. I do not suppose that our climate has been much altered since the days of our forefathers, the Picts; but certainly the human constitution in this country has been altered much. Inured as we are from our cradles to every vicissitude in a climate more various than any other, and in possession of all that modern refinement has been able to contrive for our security, we are yet as subject to blights as the tenderest blossoms of spring; and are so well admonished of every change in the atmosphere by our bodily feelings, as hardly to have any need of a weather-glass to mark them. For this we are, no doubt, indebted to the multitude of our accommodations; for it was not possible to retain the hardiness that originally belonged to our race, under the delicate management to which for many ages we have now been accustomed. I can hardly doubt that a bulldog or a game-cock might be made just as susceptible of injuries from weather as myself, were he dieted, and in all respects accommodated as I am. Or if the project did not succeed in the first instance (for we ourselves did not become what we are at once), in process of time, however, and in a course of many generations it would certainly take effect. Let such a dog be fed in his infancy with pap, Naples' biscuit, and boiled chicken; let him be wrapt in flannel at night, sleep on a good feather-bed, and ride out in a coach for an airing; and if his posterity do not become slight-limbed, puny, and valetudinarian, it will be a wonder. Thus our parents, and their parents, and the parents of both were managed; and thus ourselves; and the consequence is, that instead of being weather-proof, even without clothing, furs and flannels are not warm enough to defend us. It is ob-

servable, however, that though we have by these means lost much of our pristine vigour, our days are not the fewer. We live as long as those whom, on account of the sturdiness of their frame, the poets supposed to have been the progeny of oaks. Perhaps too they had little feeling, and for that reason also might be imagined to be so descended. For a very robust athletic habit seems inconsistent with much sensibility. But sensibility is the *sine qua non* of real happiness. If, therefore, our lives have not been shortened, and if our feelings have been rendered more exquisite as our habit of body has become more delicate, on the whole, perhaps, we have no cause to complain, but are rather gainers by our degeneracy.

Do you consider what you do, when you ask one poet his opinion of another? Yet I think I can give you an honest answer to your question, and without the least wish to nibble. Thomson was admirable in description; but it always seemed to me that there was somewhat of affectation in his style, and that his numbers are sometimes not well harmonized. I could wish too, with Dr. Johnson, that he had confined himself to this country, for when he describes what he never saw, one is forced to read him with some allowance for possible misrepresentation. He was, however, a true poet, and his lasting fame has proved it. Believe me, dear Madam, with my best respects to Mr. King, most truly yours,

W. C.

P. S. I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and hope that your next will bring me a more favourable account of your health. I know not why, but I rather suspect that you do not allow yourself sufficient air and exercise. The physicians call them non-naturals, I suppose to deter their patients from the use of them.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 24, 1788.

I rejoice that my letter found you at all points so well prepared to answer it according to our wishes. I have written to Lady Hesketh to apprise her of your intended journey hither, and she, having as yet made no assignation with us herself, will easily adjust her measures to the occasion.

I have not lately had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Bean. The late rains, which have revived the hopes of the farmers, have intercepted our communication. I hear, however, that he meets with not a little trouble, in his progress towards a reformation of Olney manners; and that the Sabbath, which he wishes to have hallowed by a stricter and more general observation of it, is, through the brutality of the lowest order, a day of more turbulence and riot than any other. At the latter end of last week he found himself obliged to make another trip to the justice, in company with two or three of the principal inhabitants. What passed, I have not learned; but I understand their errand to have been, partly at least, to efface the evil impressions made on his worship's mind, by a man who had applied to him a day or two before for a warrant against the constable; which, however, he did not obtain. I rather fear that the constables are not altogether judicious in the exercise either of their justice, or their mercy. Some who have seemed proper objects of punishment, they have released, on a hopeless promise of better behaviour; and others, whose offence has been personal against themselves, though in other respects less guilty, they have set in the stocks. The ladies, however, and of course the ladies of Silver-End in particular, give them the most trouble, being always active on these

occasions, as well as clamorous, and both with impunity. For the sex are privileged in the free use of their tongues, and of their nails, the Parliament having never yet laid them under any penal restrictions; and they employ them accordingly. Johnson, the constable, lost much of his skin, and still more of his coat, in one of those Sunday battles; and had not Ashburner hastened to his aid, had probably been completely stripped of both. With such a zeal are these fair ones animated, though, unfortunately for all parties, rather erroneously.

What you tell me of the effect that the limitation of numbers to tonnage, is likely to have on the Slave Trade, gives me the greatest pleasure. Should it amount, in the issue, to an abolition of the traffic, I shall account it indeed an argument of great wisdom in our youthful minister. A silent, and indirect way of doing it, is, I suppose, the only safe one. At the same time, in how horrid a light does it place the trade itself; when it comes to be proved by consequences, that the mere article of a little elbow-room for the poor creatures in their passage to the islands, could not be secured by an order of Parliament, without the utter annihilation of it! If so it prove, no man deserving to be called a man, can say that it ought to subsist a moment longer.—My writing-time is expended, and breakfast is at hand. With our joint love to the trio, and our best wishes for your good journey to Weston, I remain, my dear friend,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 6, 1788.

"Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear" have compelled me to draw on you for the sum of twenty pounds, payable to John Higgins, Esq. or order. The draft bears date July 5th.—You will excuse my giving you this trouble, in consideration that I am a poet, and can consequently draw for money much easier than I can earn it.

I heard of you a few days since, from Walter Bagot, who called here and told me that you were gone, I think, into Rutlandshire, to settle the accounts of a large estate unliquidated many years. Intricacies, that would turn my brains, are play to you. But I give you joy of a long vacation at hand, when I suppose that even you will find it pleasant, if not to be idle, at least not to be hemmed around by business.

Yours, ever,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Aug. 28, 1788.

Should you discard me from the number of your correspondents, you will treat me as I seem to deserve, though I do not actually deserve it. I have lately been engaged with company at our house, who resided with us five weeks, and have had much of the rheumatism into the bargain. Not in my fingers, you will say—True. But you know as well as I, that pain, be it where it may, indisposes us to writing.

You express some degree of wonder that I found you out to

be sedentary, at least much a stayer within doors, without any sufficient data for my direction. Now if I should guess your figure and stature with equal success, you will deem me not only a poet but a conjurer. Yet in fact I have no pretensions of that sort. I have only formed a picture of you in my own imagination, as we ever do of a person of whom we think much, though we have never seen that person. Your height I conceive to be about five feet five inches, which though it would make a short man, is yet height enough for a woman. If you insist on an inch or two more, I have no objection. You are not very fat, but somewhat inclined to be fat, and unless you allow yourself a little more air and exercise, will incur some danger of exceeding in your dimensions before you die. Let me, therefore, once more recommend to you to walk a little more, at least in your garden, and to amuse yourself occasionally with pulling up here and there a weed, for it will be an inconvenience to you to be much fatter than you are, at a time of life when your strength will be naturally on the decline. I have given you a fair complexion, a slight tinge of the rose in your cheeks, dark brown hair, and, if the fashion would give you leave to shew it, an open and well-formed forehead. To all this I add a pair of eyes not quite black, but nearly approaching to that hue, and very animated. I have not absolutely determined on the shape of your nose, or the form of your mouth; but should you tell me that I have in other respects drawn a tolerable likeness, have no doubt but I can describe them too. I assure you that though I have a great desire to read him, I have never seen Lavater, nor have availed myself in the least of any of his rules on this occasion. Ah, Madam! if with all that sensibility of yours, which exposes you to so much sorrow, and necessarily must expose you to it, in a world like this, I have had the good fortune to make you

smile, I have then painted you, whether with a strong resemblance, or with none at all, to very good purpose.

I had intended to have sent you a little poem, which I have lately finished, but have no room to transcribe it. You shall have it by another opportunity. Breakfast is on the table, and my time also fails, as well as my paper. I rejoice that a cousin of yours found my volumes agreeable to him, for, being your cousin, I will be answerable for his good taste and judgment.

When I wrote last, I was in mourning for a dear and much-valued uncle, Ashley Cowper. He died at the age of eighty-six. My best respects attend Mr. King; and I am, dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 2, 1788.

I rejoice that you and yours reached London safe, especially when I reflect that you performed the journey on a day so fatal, as I understand, to others travelling the same road. I found those comforts in your visit which have formerly sweetened all our interviews, in part restored. I knew you; knew you for the same shepherd who was sent to lead me out of the wilderness into the pasture where the chief Shepherd feeds his flock, and felt my sentiments of affectionate friendship for you the same as ever. But one thing was still wanting, and that thing the crown of all. I shall find it in God's time, if it be not lost for ever. When I say this, I say it trembling; for at what time soever comfort shall come, it will not come without its attendant evil; and whatever good thing may occur in the

interval, I have sad forebodings of the event, having learned by experience that I was born to be persecuted with peculiar fury, and assuredly believing, that such as my lot has been, it will be so to the end. This belief is connected in my mind with an observation I have often made, and is perhaps founded, in great part, upon it: that there is a certain *style* of dispensations maintained by Providence in the dealings of God with every man, which, however the incidents of his life may vary, and though he may be thrown into many different situations, is never exchanged for another. The style of dispensation peculiar to myself has hitherto been that of sudden, violent, unlooked-for change. When I have thought myself falling into the abyss, I have been caught up again; when I have thought myself on the threshold of a happy eternity, I have been thrust down to hell. The rough and the smooth of such a lot, taken together, should perhaps have taught me never to despair; but through an unhappy propensity in my nature to forebode the worst, they have, on the contrary, operated as an admonition to me never to hope. A firm persuasion that I can never durably enjoy a comfortable state of mind, but must be depressed in proportion as I have been elevated, withers my joys in the bud, and, in a manner, entombs them before they are born: for I have no expectation but of sad vicissitude, and ever believe that the last shock of all will be fatal.

Mr. Bean has still some trouble with his parishioners. The suppression of five public-houses is the occasion. He called on me yesterday morning for advice; though, discreet as he is himself, he has little need of such counsel as I can give him. —, who is subtle as a dozen foxes, met him on Sunday, exactly at his descent from the pulpit, and proposed to him a general meeting of the parish, in vestry, on the subject. Mr. Bean, attacked so suddenly, consented; but afterward repented that

he had done so, assured as he was that he should be out-voted. There seemed no remedy but to apprise them beforehand that he would meet them indeed, but not with a view to have the question decided by a majority : that he would take that opportunity to make his allegations against each of the houses in question, which if they could refute, well ; if not, they could no longer reasonably oppose his measures. This was what he came to submit to my opinion. I could do no less than approve it; and he left me with a purpose to declare his mind to them immediately.

I beg that you will give my affectionate respects to Mr. Bacon, and assure him of my sincere desire that he should think himself perfectly at liberty respecting the mottos, to choose one, or to reject both, as likes him best. I wish also to be remembered with much affection to Mrs. Cowper, and always rejoice to hear of her well-being.

Believe me, as I truly am, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

Sept. 25, 1788.

How surprised was I this moment to meet a servant at the gate, who told me that he came from you ! He could not have been more welcome, unless he had announced yourself. I am charmed with your kindness and with all your elegant presents. So is Mrs. Unwin, who begs me in particular to thank you warmly for the housewife, the very thing she had just begun to want. In the fire-screen you have sent me an enigma which at present I have not the ingenuity to expound ; but some

Muse will help me, or I shall meet with somebody able to instruct me. In all that I have seen besides, for that I have not yet seen, I admire both the taste and the execution. A toothpick case I had: but one so large, that no modern waistcoat pocket could possibly contain it. It was some years since the Dean of Durham's, for whose sake I valued it, though to me useless. Yours is come opportunely to supply the deficiency, and shall be my constant companion to its last thread. The cakes and the apples we will eat, remembering who sent them; and when I say this, I will add also, that when we have neither apples nor cakes to eat, we will still remember you.—What the MS. poem can be, that you suppose to have been written by me, I am not able to guess; and since you will not allow that I have guessed your person well, am become shy of exercising conjecture on any meaner subject. Perhaps they may be some mortuary verses, which I wrote last year, at the request of a certain parish-clerk. If not, and you have never seen them, I will send you them hereafter.

You have been at Bedford. Bedford is but twelve miles from Weston. When you are at home, we are but eighteen miles asunder. Is it possible that such a paltry interval can separate us always? I will never believe it. Our house is going to be filled by a cousin of mine and her train, who will, I hope, spend the winter with us. I cannot, therefore, repeat my invitation at present, but expect me to be very troublesome on that theme next summer. I could almost scold you for not making Weston in your way home from Bedford. Though I am neither a relation, nor quite eighty-six years of age, believe me I should as much rejoice to see you and Mr. King, as if I were both.

(Mrs. Unwin has this moment opened the screen, which I admire, and shall find particularly useful.)

I send you, my dear madam, the poem I promised you, and shall be glad to send you any thing and every thing I write, as fast as it flows. Behold my two volumes! which, though your old acquaintance, I thought, might receive an additional recommendation in the shape of a present from myself.

What I have written I know not, for all has been scribbled in haste. I will not tempt your servant's honesty, who seems by his countenance to have a great deal, being equally watchful to preserve uncorrupted the honesty of my own.

I am, my dearest madam, with a thousand thanks for this stroke of friendship, which I feel at my heart, and with Mrs. Unwin's very best respects, most sincerely yours,

W. C.

P. S. My two hares died little more than two years since; one of them aged ten years, the other eleven years and eleven months.

Our compliments attend Mr. King.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Oct. 11, 1788.

You are perfectly secure from all danger of being overwhelmed with presents from me. It is not much that a poet can possibly have it in his power to give. When he has presented his own works, he may be supposed to have exhausted all means of donation. They are his only superfluity. There was a time, but that time was before I commenced writer for the press; when I amused myself in a way somewhat similar to yours; allowing, I mean, for the difference between masculine and female operations. The scissors and the needle are your chief implements; mine were the chisel and the saw. In those

days you might have been in some danger of too plentiful a return for your favours. Tables, such as they were, and joint-stools such as never were, might have travelled to Perton-hall in most inconvenient abundance. But I have long since discontinued this practice, and many others which I found it necessary to adopt, that I might escape the worst of all evils, both in itself and in its consequences—an idle life. Many arts I have exercised with this view, for which nature never designed me; though among them were some in which I arrived at considerable proficiency, by mere dint of the most heroic perseverance. There is not a 'squire in all this country who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself; and in the article of cabbage-nets, I had no superior. I even had the hardiness to take in hand the pencil, and studied a whole year the art of drawing. Many figures were the fruit of my labours, which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature. But before the year was ended, I had occasion to wonder at the progress that may be made, in despite of natural deficiency, by dint alone of practice; for I actually produced three landscapes, which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed. I then judged it high time to exchange this occupation for another, lest, by any subsequent productions of inferior merit, I should forfeit the honour I had so fortunately acquired. But gardening was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began with lettuces and cauliflowers: from them I proceeded to cucumbers; next to melons. I then purchased an orange-tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and

much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a green-house, and accordingly built one; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do. When I left Olney for Weston, I could no longer have a green-house of my own; but in a neighbour's garden I find a better, of which the sole management is consigned to me.

I had need take care, when I begin a letter, that the subject with which I set off be of some importance; for before I can exhaust it, be it what it may, I have generally filled my paper. But self is a subject inexhaustible, which is the reason that though I have said little, and nothing, I am afraid, worth your hearing, I have only room to add, that I am, my dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

W. C.

P. S. Mrs. Unwin bids me present her best compliments, and say how much she shall be obliged to you for the receipt to make that most excellent cake which came hither in its native pan. There is no production of yours that will not be always most welcome at Weston.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 29, 1788.

Not to fill my paper with apologies, I will only say, that you know my occupation, and how little time it leaves me for other employments; in which, had I leisure for them, I could take much pleasure. Letter-writing would be one of the most agreeable, and especially writing to you.

Poor Jenny Raban is declining fast toward the grave, and as fast aspiring to the skies. I expected to have heard yesterday of her death; but learned, on enquiry, that she was better. Dr. Kerr has seen her, and by virtue, I suppose, of his prescriptions, her fits, with which she was frequently troubled, are become less frequent. But there is no reason, I believe, to look for her recovery. Her case is a consumption, into which I saw her sliding swiftly in the spring. There is not much to be lamented, or that ought to be so, in the death of those that go to glory. She was a beautiful girl, and perhaps may have left a heart-ache for a legacy to some poor swain at Olney; though I never heard, beautiful as she was, that she had any *lovers*. Many an ugly bundle can find an husband in such a place as Olney, while Venus herself would shine there unnoticed.

If you find many blots, and my writing illegible, you must pardon them, in consideration of the cause. Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Unwin are both talking as if they designed to make themselves amends for the silence they are enjoined while I sit translating Homer. Mrs. Unwin is preparing the breakfast, and not having seen each other since they parted to go to bed, they have consequently a deal to communicate.

I have seen Mr. Greathed, both in his own house and here. Prosperity sits well on him, and I cannot find that this advan-

lagueous change in his condition has made any alteration either in his views or his behaviour. The winter is gliding merrily away while my cousin is with us. She annihilates the difference between cold and heat, gloomy skies and cloudless. I have written I know not what, and with the dispatch of legerdemain ; but with the utmost truth and consciousness of what I say, assure you, my dear friend, that I am

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Dec. 6, 1788.

It must, if you please, be a point agreed between us, that we will not make punctuality in writing the test of our regard for each other, lest we should incur the danger of pronouncing and suffering by an unjust sentence, and this mutually. I have told you, I believe, that the half hour before breakfast is my only letter-writing opportunity. In summer I rise rather early, and consequently at that season can find more time for scribbling than at present. If I enter my study now before nine, I find all at sixes and sevens ; for servants will take, in part at least, the liberty claimed by their masters. That you may not suppose us all sluggards alike, it is necessary, however, that I should add a word or two on this subject, in justification of Mrs. Unwin, who, because the days are too short for the important concerns of knitting stockings and mending them, rises generally by candle-light ; a practice so much in the style of all the ladies of antiquity who were good for any thing, that it is impossible not to applaud it.

Mrs. Battison being dead, I began to fear that you would have no more calls to Bedford; but the marriage, so near at hand, of the young lady you mention with a gentleman of that place, gives me hope again that you may occasionally approach us as heretofore, and that on some of those occasions you will perhaps find your way to Weston. The deaths of some and the marriages of others make a new world of it every thirty years. Within that space of time, the majority are displaced, and a new generation has succeeded. Here and there one is permitted to stay a little longer, that there may not be wanting a few grave Dons like myself, to make the observation. This thought struck me very forcibly the other day, on reading a paper called the County Chronicle, which came hither in the package of some books from London. It contained news from Hertfordshire, and informed me, among other things, that at Great Berkhamstead, the place of my birth, there is hardly a family left of all those with whom, in my early days, I was so familiar. The houses, no doubt, remain, but the inhabitants are only to be found now by their grave-stones; and it is certain that I might pass through a town in which I was once a sort of principal figure, unknowing and unknown. They are happy who have not taken up their rest in a world fluctuating as the sea, and passing away with the rapidity of a river. I wish to my heart that yourself and Mr. King may long continue, as you have already long continued, exceptions from the general truth of this remark. You doubtless married early, and the thirty-six years elapsed may have yet other years to succeed them. I do not forget that your relation Mrs. Battison lived to the age of eighty-six. I am glad of her longevity, because it seems to afford some assurance of yours; and I hope to know you better yet before you die.

I have never seen the Observer, but am pleased with being

handsomely spoken of by an old school-fellow. Cumberland and I boarded together in the same house at Westminster. He was at that time clever, and I suppose has given proof sufficient to the world that he is still clever : but of all that he has written, it has never fallen in my way to read a syllable, except perhaps in a magazine or review, the sole sources, at present, of all my intelligence. Addison speaks of persons who grow dumb in the study of eloquence, and I have actually studied Homer till I am become a mere ignoramus in every other province of literature.

An almost general cessation of egg-laying among the hens has made it impossible for Mrs. Unwin to enterprise a cake. She, however, returns you a thousand thanks for the receipt; and being now furnished with the necessary ingredients, will begin directly. My letter-writing time is spent, and I must now to Homer. With my best respects to Mr. King, I remain, dear Madam,

Most affectionately yours,

W. C.

P. S. When I wrote last, I told you, I believe, that Lady Hesketh was with us. She is with us now, making a cheerful winter for us at Weston. The acquisition of a new friend, and, at a late day, the recovery of the friend of our youth, are two of the chief comforts of which this life is susceptible.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 9, 1788.

That I may return you the Latin manuscript as soon as possible, I take a short opportunity to scratch a few hasty lines, that it may not arrive alone. I have made here and there an

alteration, which appeared to me for the better ; but, on the whole, I cannot but wonder at your adroitness in a business to which you have been probably at no time much accustomed, and which, for many years, you have not at all practised. If, when you shall have written the whole, you shall wish for a corrector of the rest, so far as my own skill in the matter goes, it is entirely at your service.

Lady Hesketh is obliged to you for the part of your letter in which she is mentioned, and returns her compliments. She loves all my friends, and consequently cannot be indifferent to you. The Throckmortons are gone into Norfolk, on a visit to Lord Petre. They will probably return this day fortnight. Mr. F—— is now preacher at Ravenstone. Mr. C—— still preaches here. The latter is warmly attended. The former has heard him, having, I suppose a curiosity to know by what charm he held his popularity ; but whether he has heard him to his own edification, or not, is more than I can say. Probably he wonders, for I have heard that he is a sensible man. His successful competitor is wise in nothing but his knowledge of the gospel.

I am summoned to breakfast, and am, my dear friend, with our best love to Mrs. Newton, Miss Catlett, and yourself,

Most affectionately yours,

W. C.

I have not the assurance to call this an answer to your letter, in which were many things deserving much notice : but it is the best that, in the present moment, I am able to send you.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Jan. 29, 1789.

This morning I said to Mrs. Unwin, "I must write to Mrs. King: her long silence alarms me—something has happened." These words of mine proved only a prelude to the arrival of your messenger with his most welcome charge, for which I return you my sincerest thanks. You have sent me the very things I wanted, and which I should have continued to want, had not you sent them. As often as the wine is set on the table, I have said to myself, This is all very well; but I have no bottle-stands: and myself as often replied, No matter; you can make shift without them. Thus I and myself have conferred together many a day; and you, as if you had been privy to the conference, have kindly supplied the deficiency, and put an end to the debate for ever.

When your messenger arrived I was beginning to dress for dinner, being engaged to dine with my neighbour Mr. Throckmorton, from whose house I am just returned, and snatch a few moments before supper to tell you how much I am obliged to you. You will not, therefore, find me very prolix at present; but it shall not be long before you shall hear further from me. Your honest old neighbour sleeps under our roof, and will be gone in the morning before I shall have seen him.

I have more items than one by which to remember the late frost: it has cost me the bitterest uneasiness. Mrs. Unwin got a fall on the gravel-walk covered with ice, which has confined her to an upper chamber ever since. She neither broke nor dislocated any bones; but received such a contusion below the hip, as crippled her completely. She now begins to recover, after having been helpless as a child for a whole fortnight; but

so slowly at present, that her amendment is even now almost imperceptible.

Engaged, however, as I am with my own private anxieties, I yet find leisure to interest myself not a little in the distresses of the Royal Family, especially in those of the Queen. The Lord Chancellor called the other morning on Lord Stafford: entering the room, he threw his hat into a sofa at the fire-side, and clasping his hands, said, I have heard of distress, and I have read of it; but I never saw distress equal to that of the Queen. This I know from particular and certain authority.

My dear Madam, I have not time to enlarge at present on this subject, or to touch any other. Once more, therefore, thanking you for your kindness, of which I am truly sensible; and thanking, too, Mr. King for the favour he has done me in subscribing to my Homer, and at the same time begging you to make my best compliments to him, I conclude myself, with Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgments of your most acceptable present to her,

Your obliged and affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

March 12, 1789.

I feel myself in no small degree unworthy of the kind solicitude which you express concerning me and my welfare, after a silence so much longer than I gave you reason to expect. I should indeed account myself inexcusable, had I not to allege, in my defence, perpetual engagements of such a kind as would by no means be dispensed with. Had Homer alone been in question, Homer should have made room for you: but

I have had other work in hand at the same time, equally pressing, and more laborious. Let it suffice to say, that I have not wilfully neglected you for a moment, and that you have never been out of my thoughts a day together. But I begin to perceive, that if a man will be an author, he must live neither to himself nor to his friends so much as to others, whom he never saw nor shall see.

My promise to follow my last letter with another speedily, which promise I kept so ill, is not the only one which I am conscious of having made to you, and but very indifferently performed. I promised you all the smaller pieces that I should produce, as fast as occasion called them forth, and leisure occurred to write them. Now, the fact is, that I have produced several since I made that fair profession, of which I have sent you hardly any. The reason is, that, transcribed into the body of a letter, they would leave me no room for prose; and that other conveyance than by the post I cannot find, even after enquiry made among all my neighbours for a traveller to Kimbolton. Well, we shall see you, I hope, in the summer; and then I will show you all. I will transcribe one for you every morning before breakfast, as long as they last; and when you come down, you shall find it laid on your napkin. I sent one last week to London, which by some kind body or another, I know not whom, is to be presented to the Queen. The subject, as you may guess, is the King's recovery; a theme that might make a bad poet a good one, and a good one excel himself. This, too, you shall see when we meet, unless it should bounce upon you before, from some periodical register of all such matters.

I shall commission my cousin, who lately left us, to procure for me the book you mention. Being, and having long been, so deep in the business of translation, it was natural that I

should have many thoughts on that subject. I have accordingly had as many as would of themselves, perhaps, make a volume, and shall be glad to compare them with those of any writer recommended by Mr. Martyn. When you write next to that gentleman, I beg you, Madam, to present my compliments to him, with thanks both for the mention of Mr. Twining's book, and for the honour of his name among my subscribers.

Mrs. Unwin, though two months ago she fell, is still lame. The severity of the season, which has not suffered her to exercise herself in the open air, has, no doubt, retarded her recovery: but she recovers, though even more slowly than she walks. She joins me in best respects to yourself and Mr. King, and in hearty desires to see you both at Weston. Forgive the past. I make no more promises, except to remain always, my dear Madam,

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

April 22, 1789.

Having waited hitherto in expectation of the messenger whom, in your last, you mentioned a design to send, I have at length sagaciously surmised that you delay to send him in expectation of hearing first from me. I would that his errand hither were better worthy the journey. I shall have no very voluminous packet to charge him with when he comes. Such, however, as it is, it is ready; and has received an addition in the interim of one copy, which would not have made a part of it, had your Mercury arrived here sooner. It is on the subject of the Queen's visit to London on the night of the illumina-

tions. Mrs. Unwin, knowing the burthen that lies on my back too heavy for any but Atlantean shoulders, has kindly performed the copyist's part, and transcribed all that I had to send you. Observe, Madam, I do not write this to hasten your messenger hither, but merely to account for my own silence. It is probable that the later he arrives, the more he will receive when he comes; for I never fail to write when I think I have found a favourable subject.

We mourn that we must give up the hope of seeing you and Mr. King at Weston. Had our correspondence commenced sooner, we had certainly found the means of meeting; but it seems that we were doomed to know each other too late for a meeting in this world. May a better world make us amends, as it certainly will, if I ever reach a better! Our interviews here are but imperfect pleasures at the best; and generally from such as promise us most gratification, we receive the most disappointment. But disappointment is, I suppose, confined to the planet on which we dwell; the only one in the universe, probably, that is inhabited by sinners.

I did not know, or even suspect, that when I received your last messenger, I received so eminent a disciple of Hippocrates; a physician of such absolute control over disease and the human constitution, as to be able to put a pestilence into his pocket, confine it there, and to let it loose at his pleasure. We are much indebted to him, that he did not give us here a stroke of his ability.

I must not forget to mention that I have received (probably not without your privity) Mr. Twining's valuable volume. For a long time I supposed it to have come from my bookseller, who now and then sends me a new publication; but I find, on enquiry, that it came not from him. I beg, Madam, if you are aware that Mr. Twining himself sent it, or your friend Mr.

Martyn, that you will negotiate for me on the occasion, and contrive to convey to the obliging donor my very warmest thanks. I am impatient till he receives them. I have not yet had time to do justice to a writer so sensible, elegant, and entertaining, by a complete perusal of his work ; but I have with pleasure sought out all those passages to which Mr. Martyn was so good as to refer me, and am delighted to observe the exact agreement in opinion on the subject of translation in general, and on that of Mr. Pope's in particular, that subsists between Mr. Twining and myself. With Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, I remain, my dear Madam, your obliged and affectionate

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

April 30, 1789.

I thought to have sent you, by the return of your messenger, a letter ; at least, something like one : but instead of sleeping here, as I supposed he would, he purposes to pass the night at Lavendon, a village three miles off. This design of his is but just made known to me, and it is now near seven in the evening. Therefore, lest he should be obliged to feel out his way, in an unknown country, in the dark, I am forced to scribble a hasty word or two, instead of devoting, as I intended, the whole evening to your service.

A thousand thanks for your basket, and all the good things that it contained ; particularly for my brother's Poems, whose hand-writing struck me the moment I saw it. They gave me some feelings of a melancholy kind, but not painful. I will return them to you by the next opportunity. I wish that mine,

which I send you, may prove half as pleasant to you as your excellent cakes and apples have proved to us. You will then think yourself sufficiently recompensed for your obliging present. If a crab-stock can transform a pippin into a nonpareil, what may not I effect in a translation of Homer? Alas! I fear, nothing half so valuable.

I have learned at length that I am indebted for Twining's Aristotle to a relation of mine, General Cowper.

Pardon me that I quit you so soon. It is not willingly; but I have compassion on your poor messenger.

Adieu, my dear Madam, and believe me

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

DEAREST MADAM,

May 30, 1789.

Many thanks for your kind and valuable dispatches, none of which, except your letter, I have yet had time to read; for true it is, and a sad truth too, that I was in bed when your messenger arrived. He waits only for my answer, for which reason I answer as speedily as I can.

I am glad if my poetical packet pleased you. Those stanzas on the Queen's visit were presented some time since, by Miss Goldsworthy, to the Princess Augusta, who has probably given them to the Queen; but of their reception I have heard nothing. I gratified myself by complimenting two sovereigns whom I love and honour; and that gratification will be my reward. It would, indeed, be unreasonable to expect that persons who keep a Laureat in constant pay, should have either praise or emolument to

spare for every volunteer who may choose to make them his subject.

I will take the greatest care of the papers with which you have entrusted me, and will return them by the next opportunity. It is very unfortunate that the people of Bedford should choose to have the small-pox, just at the season when it would be sure to prevent our meeting. God only knows, Madam, when we shall meet, or whether at all in this world ; but certain it is, that whether we meet or not,

I am most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Aug. 1, 1789.

The post brings me no letters that do not grumble at my silence. Had not you, therefore, taken me to task as roundly as others, I should have concluded you, perhaps, more indifferent to my epistles than the rest of my correspondents; of whom one says—"I shall be glad when you have finished Homer; then possibly you will find a little leisure for an old friend." Another says—"I don't choose to be neglected, unless you equally neglect every one else." Thus I hear of it with both ears, and shall, till I appear in the shape of two great quarto volumes, the composition of which, I confess, engrosses me to a degree that gives my friends, to whom I feel myself much obliged for their anxiety to hear from me, but too much reason to complain. Johnson told Mr. Martyn the truth; but your inference from that truth is not altogether so just as most of your conclusions are. Instead of finding myself the more at leisure because my long labour draws to a close, I find myself the more occupied.

As when a horse approaches the goal, he does not, unless he be jaded, slacken his pace, but quickens it : even so it fares with me. The end is in view ; I seem almost to have reached the mark ; and the nearness of it inspires me with fresh alacrity. But, be it known to you that I have still two books of the *Odyssey* before me, and, when they are finished, shall have almost the whole eight and forty to revise. Judge, then, my dear Madam, if it is yet time for me to play, or to gratify myself with scribbling to those I love. No. It is still necessary that waking I should be all absorpt in Homer, and that sleeping I should dream of nothing else.

I am a great lover of good paintings, but no connoisseur, having never had an opportunity to become one. In the last forty years of my life, I have hardly seen six pictures that were worth looking at ; for I was never a frequenter of auctions, having never had any spare money in my pocket ; and the public exhibitions of them in London had hardly taken place when I left it. My cousin, who is with us, saw the gentleman whose pieces you mention, on the top of a scaffold, copying a famous picture in the Vatican. She has seen some of his performances, and much admires him.

You have had a great loss, and a loss that admits of no consolation, except such as will naturally suggest itself to *you* ; such, I mean, as the scripture furnishes. We must all leave, or be left ; and it is the circumstance of all others that makes long life the least desirable, that others go while we stay, till at last we find ourselves alone, like a tree on a hill-top.

Accept, my dear Madam, mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to yourself and Mr. King, and believe me, however unfrequent in telling you that I am so,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

August 12, 1789.

I rejoice that you and Mrs. Hill are so agreeably occupied in your retreat. August, I hope, will make us amends for the gloom of its many wintry predecessors. We are now gathering from our meadows, not hay, but muck; such stuff as deserves not the carriage, which yet it must have, that the after-crop may have leave to grow. The Ouse has hardly deigned to run in his channel since the summer began.

My muse were a vixen, if she were not always ready to fly in obedience to your commands. But what can be done? I can write nothing in the few hours that remain to me of this day, that will be fit for your purpose; and, unless I could dispatch what I write by to-morrow's post, it would not reach you in time. I must add, too, that my friend the vicar of the next parish* engaged me, the day before yesterday, to furnish him by next Sunday with a hymn, to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the Children of the Sunday-school:† of which hymn I have not yet produced a syllable. I am somewhat in the case of lawyer Dowling, in *Tom Jones*; and could I split myself into as many poets as there are Muses, could find employment for them all.

Adieu, my dear friend,

I am ever yours,

W. C.

* Olney.

† "Hear, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r," &c.

Vide Poems, vol. 3. page 138.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 16, 1789.

Mrs. Newton and you are both kind and just in believing that I do not love you less when I am long silent. Perhaps a friend of mine, who wishes me to have him always in my thoughts, is never so effectually possessed of the accomplishment of that wish, as when I have been long his debtor; for *then* I think of him not only every day, but day and night, and all day long. But I confess at the same time, that my thoughts of you will be more pleasant to myself when I shall have exonerated my conscience by giving you the letter so long due. Therefore, here it comes;—little worth your having; but payment, such as it is, that you have a right to expect, and that is essential to my own tranquillity.

That the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* should have proved the occasion of my suspending my correspondence with you, is a proof how little we foresee the consequences of what we publish. Homer, I dare say, hardly at all suspected that at the fag-end of time two personages would appear, the one ycleped Sir Newton, and the other Sir Cowper, who, loving each other heartily, would nevertheless suffer the pains of an interrupted intercourse, his poems the cause. So, however, it has happened; and though it would not, I suppose, extort from the old bard a single sigh, if he knew it, yet to me it suggests the serious reflection above-mentioned. An author by profession had need narrowly to watch his pen, lest a line should escape it which by possibility may do mischief, when he has been long dead and buried. What we have done, when we have written a book, will never be known till the day of judgment: then the account will be liqui-

dated, and all the good that it has occasioned, and all the evil, will witness either for or against us.

I am now in the last book of the *Odyssey*, yet have still, I suppose, half a year's work before me. The accurate revisal of two such voluminous poems can hardly cost me less. I rejoice, however, that the goal is in prospect; for though it has cost me years to run this race, it is only now that I begin to have a glimpse of it. That I shall never receive any proportionable pecuniary recompense for my long labours is pretty certain; and as to any fame that I may possibly gain by it, *that* is a commodity that daily sinks in value, in measure as the consummation of all things approaches. In the day when the lion shall dandle the kid, and a little child shall lead them, the world will have lost all relish for the fabulous legends of antiquity, and Homer and his translator may budge off the stage together.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 1, 1789.

On this fine first of December, under an unclouded sky, and in a room full of sun-shine, I address myself to the payment of a debt long in arrear, but never forgotten by me, however I may have seemed to forget it. I will not waste time in apologies. I have but one, and that one will suggest itself unmentioned. I will only add, that you are the first to whom I write, of several to whom I have not written many months, who all have claims upon me; and who, I flatter myself, are all grumbling at my silence. In your case, perhaps, I have been less anxious than in the case of some others; because if

you have not heard from myself, you have heard from Mrs. Unwin. From her you have learned that I live, that I am as well as usual, and that I translate Homer:—three short items, but in which is comprised the whole detail of my present history. Thus I fared when you were here; thus I have fared ever since you were here; and thus, if it please God, I shall continue to fare for some time longer: for, though the work is done, it is not finished; a riddle which you, who are a brother of the press, will solve easily. I have also been the less anxious, because I have had frequent opportunities to hear of you; and have always heard that you are in good health and happy. Of Mrs. Newton, too, I have heard more favourable accounts of late, which have given us both the sincerest pleasure. Mrs. Unwin's case is, at present, my only subject of uneasiness, that is not immediately personal, and properly my own. She has almost constant head-aches; almost a constant pain in her side, which nobody understands; and her lameness, within the last half year, is very little amended. But her spirits are good, because supported by comforts which depend not on the state of the body; and I do not know that, with all these pains, her looks are at all altered since we had the happiness to see you here, unless, perhaps, they are altered a little for the better. I have thus given you as circumstantial an account of ourselves as I could; the most interesting matter, I verily believe, with which I could have filled my paper, unless I could have made spiritual mercies to myself the subject. In my next, perhaps, I shall find leisure to bestow a few lines on what is doing in France, and in the Austrian Netherlands; though, to say the truth, I am much better qualified to write an essay on the siege of Troy, than to descant on any of these modern revolutions. I question if, in either of the countries just mentioned, full of bustle and tumult as they are, there be a single character whom

Homer, were he living, would deign to make his hero. The populace are the heroes now, and the stuff of which gentlemen heroes are made, seems to be all expended.

I will endeavour that my next letter shall not follow this so tardily as this has followed the last ; and with our joint affectionate remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Newton, remain as ever,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Jan. 4, 1790.

Your long silence has occasioned me to have a thousand anxious thoughts about you. So long it has been, that whether I now write to a Mrs. King at present on earth, or already in Heaven, I know not. I have friends whose silence troubles me less, though I have known them longer ; because, if I hear not from themselves, I yet hear from others that they are still living, and likely to live. But if your letters cease to bring me news of your welfare, from whom can I gain the desirable intelligence ? The birds of the air will not bring it, and third person there is none between us by whom it might be conveyed. Nothing is plain to me on this subject, but that either you are dead, or very much indisposed ; or, which would affect me with perhaps as deep a concern, though of a different kind, very much offended. The latter of these suppositions I think the least probable, conscious as I am of an habitual desire to offend nobody, especially a lady and especially a lady to whom I have many obligations. But all the three solutions above-mentioned are very uncomfortable ; and if you live, and can send me one that will cause me less pain than either of them, I conjure you, by the charity and benevo-

lence which I know influence you upon all occasions, to communicate it without delay.

It is possible, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, that you are not become perfectly indifferent to me, and to what concerns me. I will therefore add a word or two on a subject which once interested you, and which is, for that reason, worthy to be mentioned, though truly for no other—meaning myself. I am well, and have been so (uneasiness on your account excepted) both in mind and body, ever since I wrote to you last. I have still the same employment. Homer in the morning, and Homer in the evening, as constant as the day goes round. In the Spring I hope to send the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the press. So much for me and my occupations. Poor Mrs. Unwin has hitherto had but an unpleasant winter; unpleasant as constant pain, either in the head or side, could make it. She joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King, and in earnest wishes that you will soon favour me with a line that shall relieve me from all my perplexities.

I am, dear Madam,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Jan. 18, 1790.

The sincerest thanks attend you, both from Mrs. Unwin and myself, for many good things, on some of which I have already regaled with an affectionate remembrance of the giver. We have not yet opened the cocoa-nut, but it was particularly welcome. It is medicine to Mrs. Unwin, who finds it always more beneficial to her health than any thing properly called

medicinal. We are truly sorry that you are so much a sufferer by the rheumatism. I also occasionally suffer by the same disorder, and in years past was much tormented by it. I can therefore pity you.

The report that informed you of enquiries made by Mrs. Unwin after a house at Huntingdon was unfounded. We have no thought of quitting Weston, unless the same Providence that led us hither, should lead us away. It is a situation perfectly agreeable to us both; and to me in particular, who write much and walk much, and consequently love silence and retirement, one of the most eligible. If it has a fault, it is that it seems to threaten us with a certainty of never seeing you. But may we not hope that when a milder season shall have improved your health, we may yet, notwithstanding the distance, be favoured with Mr. King's and your company? A better season will likewise improve the roads, and exactly in proportion as it does so, will, in effect, lessen the interval between us. I know not if Mr. Martyn be a mathematician, but most probably he is a good one, and he can tell you that this is a proposition mathematically true, though rather paradoxical in appearance.

I am obliged to that gentleman, and *much* obliged to him for his favourable opinion of my translation. What parts of Homer are particularly intended by the critics, as those in which I shall probably fall short, I know not; but let me fail where I may, I shall fail no where through want of endeavours to avoid it. The under parts of the poems (those I mean which are merely narrative,) I find the most difficult. These can only be supported by the diction, and on these, for that reason, I have bestowed the most abundant labour. Fine similes, and fine speeches take care of themselves; but the exact process of slaying a sheep and dressing it, it is not so easy to dignify in our language, and in our measure. But I shall have the comfort, as I said, to reflect, that

whatever may be hereafter laid to my charge, the sin of idleness will not. Justly, at least, it never will. In the mean time, my dear Madam, I whisper to you a secret ;—not to fall short of the original in every thing, is impossible.

I send you, I believe, all my pieces that you have never seen. Did I not send you Catharina? If not, you shall have it hereafter. I am, dear Madam, ever in haste,

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 5, 1790.

Your kind letter deserved a speedier answer, but you know my excuse, which were I to repeat always, my letters would resemble the fag-end of a newspaper, where we always find the price of stocks, detailed with little or no variation.

When January returns, you have your feelings concerning me, and such as prove the faithfulness of your friendship. I have mine also concerning myself, but they are of a cast different from yours. Yours have a mixture of sympathy and tender solicitude, which makes them, perhaps, not altogether unpleasant. Mine, on the contrary, are of an unmixed nature, and consist simply, and merely, of the most alarming apprehensions. Twice has that month returned upon me, accompanied by such horrors as I have no reason to suppose ever made part of the experience of any other man. I accordingly look forward to it, and meet it, with a dread not to be imagined. I number the nights as they pass, and in the morning bless myself that another night is gone, and no harm has happened. This may argue, perhaps, some imbecility of mind, and no small degree of it ; but it is

natural, I believe, and so natural as to be necessary and unavoidable. I know that God is not governed by secondary causes, in any of his operations, and that, on the contrary, they are all so many agents, in his hand, which strike only when he bids them. I know consequently that one month is as dangerous to me as another, and that in the middle of summer, at noon-day, and in the clear sunshine, I am, in reality, unless guarded by him, as much exposed, as when fast asleep at midnight, and in mid-winter. But we are not always the wiser for our knowledge, and I can no more avail myself of mine, than if it were in the head of another man, and not in my own. I have heard of bodily aches and ails that have been particularly troublesome when the season returned in which the hurt that occasioned them was received. The mind, I believe, (with my own, however, I am sure it is so,) is liable to similar periodical affection. But February is come; January, my terror, is passed; and some shades of the gloom that attended his presence, have passed with him. I look forward with a little cheerfulness to the buds and the leaves that will soon appear, and say to myself, till they turn yellow I will make myself easy. The year will go round, and January will approach. I shall tremble again, and I know it; but in the mean time I will be as comfortable as I can. Thus, in respect of peace of mind, such as it is that I enjoy, I subsist, as the poor are vulgarly said to do, from hand to mouth; and of a Christian, such as you once knew me, am, by a strange transformation, become an Epicurean philosopher, bearing this motto on my mind,—*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge querere*.

I have run on in a strain that the beginning of your letter suggested to me, with such impetuosity, that I have not left myself opportunity to write more by the present post: and being unwilling that you should wait longer for what will be worth

nothing when you get it, will only express the great pleasure we feel on hearing, as we did lately from Mr. Bull, that Mrs. Newton is so much better.

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

March 12, 1790.

I live in such a nook, have so few opportunities of hearing news, and so little time to read it, that to me, to begin a letter seems always a sort of forlorn hope. Can it be possible, I say to myself, that I should have any thing to communicate? These misgivings have an ill effect, so far as my punctuality is concerned, and are apt to deter me from the business of letter-writing, as from an enterprise altogether impracticable.

I will not say that you are more pleased with my trifles than they deserve, lest I should seem to call your judgment in question ; but I suspect that a little partiality to the brother of my brother, enters into the opinion you form of them. No matter, however, by what you are influenced, it is for my interest that you should like them at any rate, because, such as they are, they are the only return I can make you for all your kindness. This consideration will have two effects ; it will have a tendency to make me more industrious in the production of such pieces, and more attentive to the manner in which I write them. This reminds me of a piece in your possession, which I will entreat you to commit to the flames, because I am somewhat ashamed of it. To make you amends, I hereby promise to send you a new edition of it when time shall serve, delivered from the passages that I dislike in the first, and in other respects amended.

The piece that I mean, is one entitled—"To Lady Hesketh on her furnishing for me our house at Weston"—or, as the lawyers say, words to that amount. I have, likewise, since I sent you the last packet, been delivered of two or three other brats, and, as the year proceeds, shall probably add to the number. All that come, shall be basketed in time, and conveyed to your door.

I have lately received from a female cousin of mine in Norfolk, whom I have not seen these five and thirty years, a picture of my own mother. She died when I wanted two days of being six years old; yet I remember her perfectly, find the picture a strong likeness of her, and because her memory has been ever precious to me, have written a poem on the receipt of it: a poem which, one excepted, I had more pleasure in writing than any that I ever wrote. That one was addressed to a lady whom I expect in a few minutes to come down to breakfast, and who has supplied to me the place of my own mother—my own invaluable mother, these six and twenty years. Some sons may be said to have had many fathers, but a plurality of mothers is not common.

Adieu, my dear Madam, be assured that I always think of you with much esteem and affection, and am, with mine and Mrs. Unwin's best compliments to you and yours, most unfeignedly your friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May 2, 1790.

I am still at the old sport—Homer all the morning, and Homer all the evening. Thus have I been held in constant

employment, I know not exactly how many, but I believe these six years, an interval of eight months excepted. It has now become so familiar to me to take Homer from my shelf at a certain hour, that I shall, no doubt, continue to take him from my shelf at the same time, even after I have ceased to want him. That period is not far distant. I am now giving the last touches to a work which, had I foreseen the difficulty of it, I should never have meddled with ; but which, having at length nearly finished it to my mind, I shall discontinue with regret.

My very best compliments attend Mrs. Hill, whom I love, unsight unseen, as they say ; but yet truly.

Yours ever,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

June 14, 1790.

I have hardly a scrap of paper belonging to me that is not scribbled over with blank verse ; and taking out your letter from a bundle of others, this moment, I find it thus inscribed on the seal side.

—meantime his steeds

Snorted, by Myrmidons detain'd, and loosed

From their own master's chariot, foam'd to fly.

You will easily guess to what they belong ; and I mention the circumstance merely in proof of my perpetual engagement to Homer, whether at home or abroad ; for when I committed these lines to the back of your letter, I was rambling at a considerable distance from home. I set one foot on a mole-hill, placed my hat with the crown upward on my knee, laid your letter upon it, and with a pencil wrote the fragment that I have

sent you. In the same posture I have written many and many a passage of a work which I hope soon to have done with. But all this is foreign to what I intended when I first took pen in hand. My purpose then was, to excuse my long silence as well as I could, by telling you that I am at present not only a labourer in verse, but in prose also, having been requested by a friend, to whom I could not refuse it, to translate for him a series of Latin letters received from a Dutch minister of the gospel at the Cape of Good Hope. With this additional occupation you will be sensible that my hands are full; and it is a truth that, except to yourself, I would, just at this time, have written to nobody.

I felt a true concern for what you told me in your last respecting the ill-state of health of your much valued friend Mr. Martyn. You say, if I knew half his worth, I should, with you, wish his longer continuance below. Now you must understand that, ignorant as I am of Mr. Martyn, except by your report of him, I do nevertheless sincerely wish it—and that both for your sake and my own; nor less for the sake of the public. For your sake, because you love and esteem him highly; for the sake of the public, because, should it please God to take him before he has completed his great botanical work, I suppose no other person will be able to finish it so well; and for my own sake, because I know he has a kind and favourable opinion beforehand of my translation, and consequently, should it justify his prejudice when it appears, he will stand my friend against an army of Cambridge critics.—It would have been strange indeed if *self* had not peeped out on this subject.—I beg you will present my best respects to him, and assure him that were it possible he could visit Weston, I should be most happy to receive him.

Mrs. Unwin would have been employed in transcribing my rhymes for you, would her health have permitted; but it is very

seldom she can write without being much a sufferer by it. She has almost a constant pain in her side, which forbids it. As soon as it leaves her, or much abates, she will be glad to work for you.

I am, like you and Mr. King, an admirer of clouds, but only when there are blue intervals, and pretty wide ones too, between them. One cloud is too much for me, but a hundred are not too many. So with this riddle and with my best respects to Mr. King, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's to you both—I remain, my dear Madam,

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

July 16, 1790.

Taking it for granted that this will find you at Perton-hall, I follow you with an early line, and a hasty one, to tell you how much we rejoice to have seen yourself and Mr. King; and how much regret you have left behind you. The wish that we expressed when we were together, Mrs. Unwin and I have more than once expressed since your departure, and have always felt it—that it had pleased Providence to appoint our habitations nearer to each other. This is a life of wishes, and they only are happy who have arrived where wishes cannot enter. We shall live now in hope of a second meeting, and a longer interview; which, if it please God to continue to you, and to Mr. King, your present measure of health, you will be able, I trust, to contrive hereafter. You did not leave us without encouragement to expect it; and I know that you do not raise expectations but with a sincere design to fulfil them.

Nothing shall be wanting, on our part, to accomplish in due time a journey to Perton-hall. But I am a strange creature, who am less able than any man living to project any thing out of the common course, with a reasonable prospect of performance. I have singularities, of which, I believe, at present you know nothing; and which would fill you with wonder, if you knew them. I will add, however, in justice to myself, that they would not lower me in your good opinion; though, perhaps, they might tempt you to question the soundness of my upper story. Almost twenty years have I been thus unhappily circumstanced; and the remedy is in the hand of God only. That I make you this partial communication on the subject, conscious, at the same time, that you are well worthy to be entrusted with the whole, is merely because the recital would be too long for a letter, and painful both to me and to you. But all this may vanish in a moment; and, if it please God, it shall. In the mean time, dear Madam, remember me in your prayers, and mention me at those times, as one whom it has pleased God to afflict with singular visitations.

How I regret, for poor Mrs. Unwin's sake, your distance! She has no friend suitable as you to her disposition and character, in all the neighbourhood. Mr. King, too, is just the friend and companion with whom I could be happy; but such grow not in this country. Pray tell him that I remember him with much esteem and regard; and, believe me, my dear Madam, with the sincerest affection,

Yours entirely,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Aug. 11, 1790.

That I may not seem unreasonably tardy in answering your last kind letter, I steal a few minutes from my customary morning business, (at present the translation of Mr. Van Lier's Narrative,) to inform you that I received it safe from the hands of Judith Hughes, whom we met in the middle of Hill-field. Desirous of gaining the earliest intelligence possible concerning Mrs. Newton, we were going to call on her, and she was on her way to us. It grieved us much that her news on that subject corresponded so little with our earnest wishes of Mrs. Newton's amendment. But if Dr. Benamer still gives hope of her recovery, it is not, I trust, without substantial reason for doing so; much less can I suppose that he would do it contrary to his own persuasions, because a thousand reasons that must influence, in such a case, the conduct of a humane and sensible physician, concur to forbid it. If it shall please God to restore her, no tidings will give greater joy to us. In the mean time, it is our comfort to know, that in any event you will be sure of supports invaluable, and that cannot fail you; though, at the same time, I know well, that, with your feelings, and especially on so affecting a subject, you will have need of the full exercise of all your faith and resignation. To a greater trial no man can be called, than that of being a helpless eye-witness of the sufferings of one he loves, and loves tenderly. This I know by experience: but it is long since I had any experience of those communications from above, which alone can enable us to acquit ourselves, on such an occasion, as we ought. But it is otherwise with you, and I rejoice that it is so.

With respect to my own initiation into the secret of animal

magnetism, I have a thousand doubts. Twice, as you know, I have been overwhelmed with the blackest despair; and at those times every thing in which I have been at any period of my life concerned, has afforded to the enemy a handle against me. I tremble, therefore, almost at every step I take, lest on some future similar occasion it should yield him opportunity, and furnish him with means to torment me. Decide for me, if you can; and in the mean time, present, if you please, my respectful compliments and very best thanks to Mr. Holloway, for his most obliging offer. I am, perhaps, the only man living who would hesitate a moment, whether, on such easy terms, he should or should not accept it. But if he finds another like me, he will make a greater discovery than even that which he has already made of the principles of this wonderful art. For I take it for granted, that he is the gentleman whom you once mentioned to me as indebted only to his own penetration for the knowledge of it.

I shall proceed, you may depend on it, with all possible dispatch in your business. Had it fallen into my hands a few months later, I should have made quicker riddance; for before the autumn shall be ended, I hope to have done with Homer. But my first morning hour or two (now and then a letter which must be written excepted) shall always be at your service till the whole is finished.

Commending you and Mrs. Newton, with all the little power I have of that sort, to His fatherly and tender care in whom you have both believed, in which friendly office I am fervently joined by Mrs. Unwin, I remain, with our sincere love to you both, and to Miss Catlett, my dear friend, most affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 17, 1790.

I received last night a copy of my subscribers' names from Johnson, in which I see how much I have been indebted to yours and to Mrs. Hill's solicitations. Accept my best thanks, so justly due to you both. It is an illustrious catalogue, in respect of rank and title; but methinks I should have liked it as well had it been more numerous. The sum subscribed however, will defray the expense of printing; which is as much as, in these unsubscribing days, I had any reason to promise myself. I devoutly second your droll wish, that the booksellers may contend about me. The more the better. Seven times seven, if they please; and let them fight with the fury of Achilles,

Till ev'ry rubric-post be crimson'd o'er
With blood of booksellers, in battle slain,
For me, and not a periwig untorn.

Most truly yours,

W. C.

 TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Oct. 5, 1790.

I am truly concerned that you have so good an excuse for your silence. Were it proposed to my choice, whether you should omit to write through illness or indifference to me, I should be selfish enough, perhaps, to find decision difficult for a few moments; but have such an opinion, at the same time, of my affection for you, as to be verily persuaded that I should at last

make a right option, and wish you rather to forget me than to be afflicted. But there is One, wiser and more your friend than I can possibly be, who appoints all your sufferings, and who, by a power altogether his own, is able to make them good for you.

I wish heartily that my verses had been more worthy of the Counterpane, their subject. The gratitude I felt, when you brought it and gave it to me, might have inspired better; but a head full of Homer, I find, by sad experience, is good for little else. Lady Hesketh, who is here, has seen your gift, and pronounced it the most beautiful and best executed of the kind she ever saw.

I have lately received from my bookseller a copy of my subscribers' names, and do not find among them the name of Mr. Professor Martyn. I mention it, because you informed me, some time since, of his kind intention to number himself among my encouragers on this occasion; and because I am unwilling to lose, for want of speaking in time, the honour that his name will do me. It is possible, too, that he may have subscribed, and that his non-appearance may be owing merely to Johnson's having forgot to enter his name. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to ascertain the matter. The catalogue will be printed soon, and published in the *Analytical Review*, as the last and most effectual way of advertising my Translation; and the name of the gentleman in question will be particularly serviceable to me in this first edition of it.

My whole work is in the booksellers' hands, and ought by this time to be in the press. The next spring is the time appointed for the publication. It is a genial season, when people who are ever good-tempered at all, are sure to be so; a circumstance well worthy of an author's attention, especially of mine, who am just going to give a thump on the outside of the critics' hive, that will probably alarm them all.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is on the whole rather improved in her health since we had the pleasure of your short visit; I should say, the pleasure of your visit, and the pain of its shortness.

I am, my dearest Madam,
Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 15, 1790.

We were surprised and grieved at Mrs. Scott's sudden departure; grieved, you may suppose, not for *her*, but for *him*, whose loss, except that in God he has an all-sufficient good, is irreparable. The day of separation between those who have loved long and well, is an awful day, inasmuch as it calls the Christian's faith and submission to the severest trial. Yet I account those happy, who, if they are severely tried, shall yet be supported, and be carried safely through. What would become of me on a similar occasion! I have one comfort, and only one: bereft of that, I should have nothing left to lean on; for my spiritual props have long since been struck from under me.

I have no objection at all to being known as the translator of Van Lier's Letters, when they shall be published. Rather, I am ambitious of it, as an honour. It will serve to prove, that if I have spent much time to little purpose in the translation of Homer, some small portion of my time has, however, been well disposed of.

The honour of your preface prefixed to my Poems will be on my side; for surely, to be known as the friend of a much-

favoured minister of God's word, is a more illustrious distinction, in reality, than to have the friendship of any poet in the world to boast of.

We sympathize truly with you under all your tender concern for Mrs. Newton, and with her in all her sufferings from such various and discordant maladies. Alas! what a difference have twenty-three years made in us, and in our condition! for just so-long it is since Mrs. Unwin and I came into Buckinghamshire. Yesterday was the anniversary of that memorable æra. Farewell.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 26, 1790.

We should have been happy to have received from you a more favourable account of Mrs. Newton's health. Yours is indeed a post of observation, and of observation the most interesting. It is well that you are enabled to bear the stress and intenseness of it without prejudice to your own health, or impediment to your ministry.

The last time I wrote to Johnson, I made known to him your wishes to have your preface printed, and affixed, as soon as an opportunity shall offer; expressing, at the same time, my own desires to have it done. Whether I shall have any answer to my proposal, is a matter of much uncertainty; for he is always either too idle or too busy, I know not which, to write to me. Should you happen to pass his way, perhaps it would not be amiss to speak to him on the subject; for it is easier to carry a point by six words spoken, than by writing as many sheets about it. I have asked him hither, when my cousin

Johnson shall leave us, which will be in about a fortnight; and should he come, will enforce the measure myself.

A yellow shower of leaves is falling continually from all the trees in the country. A few moments only seem to have passed since they were buds; and in few moments more, they will have disappeared. It is one advantage of a rural situation, that it affords many hints of the rapidity with which life flies, that do not occur in towns and cities. It is impossible for a man, conversant with such scenes as surround me, not to advert daily to the shortness of his existence here, admonished of it, as he must be, by ten thousand objects. There was a time when I could contemplate my present state, and consider myself as a thing of a day with pleasure; when I numbered the seasons as they passed in swift rotation, as a schoolboy numbers the days that interpose between the next vacation, when he shall see his parents and enjoy his home again. But to make so just an estimate of a life like this, is no longer in my power. The consideration of my short continuance here, which was once grateful to me, now fills me with regret. I would live and live always, and am become such another wretch as Mæcenas was, who wished for long life, he cared not at what expense of sufferings. The only consolation left me on this subject is, that the voice of the Almighty can in one moment cure me of this mental infirmity. That He can, I know by experience; and there are reasons for which I ought to believe that He will. But from hope to despair is a transition that I have made so often, that I can only consider the hope that may come, and that sometimes I believe will, as a short prelude of joy to a miserable conclusion of sorrow that shall never end. Thus are my brightest prospects clouded, and thus to me is hope itself become like a withered flower, that has lost both its hue and its fragrance.

I ought not to have written in this dismal strain to you in your present trying situation, nor did I intend it. You have more need to be cheered than to be saddened; but a dearth of other themes constrained me to choose myself for a subject, and of myself I can write no otherwise.

Adieu, my dear friend. We are well; and, notwithstanding all that I have said, I am myself as cheerful as usual. Lady Hesketh is here, and in her company even I, except now and then for a moment, forget my sorrows.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Nov. 29, 1790.

I value highly, as I ought and hope that I always shall, the favourable opinion of such men as Mr. Martyn: though, to say the truth, their commendations, instead of making me proud, have rather a tendency to humble me, conscious as I am that I am over-rated. There is an old piece of advice, given by an ancient poet and satirist, which it behoves every man, who stands well in the opinion of others, to lay up in his bosom:—*Take care to be what you are reported to be.* By due attention to this wise counsel, it is possible to turn the praises of our friends to good account, and to convert that which might prove an incentive to vanity into a lesson of wisdom. I will keep your good and respectable friend's letter very safely, and restore it to you the first opportunity. I beg, my dear Madam, that you will present my best compliments to Mr. Martyn, when you shall either see him next or write to him.

To that gentleman's enquiries I am, doubtless, obliged for the

recovery of no small proportion of my subscription-list : for in consequence of his application to Johnson, and very soon after it, I received from him no fewer than forty-five names, that had been omitted in the last he sent me, and that would probably never have been thought of more. No author, I believe, has a more inattentive or indolent bookseller : but he has every body's good word for liberality and honesty ; therefore I must be content.

The press proceeds at present as well as I can reasonably wish. A month has passed since we began, and I revised this morning the first sheet of the sixth Iliad. Mrs. Unwin begs to add a line from herself, so that I have only room to subjoin my best respects to Mr. King, and to say that I am truly,

My dear Madam, yours,

W. G.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 5, 1790.

Sometimes I am too sad, and sometimes too busy, to write. Both these causes have concurred lately to keep me silent. But more than by either of these I have been hindered, since I received your last, by a violent cold, which oppressed me during almost the whole month of November.

Your letter affected us with both joy and sorrow : with sorrow and sympathy respecting poor Mrs. Newton, whose feeble and dying state suggests a wish for her release, rather than for her continuance ; and joy on your account, who are enabled to bear, with so much resignation and cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, the prospect of a loss, which even they who know you best apprehended might prove too much for you. As to

Mrs. Newton's interest in the best things, none, intimately acquainted with her as we have been, could doubt it. She doubted it indeed herself; but though it is not our duty to doubt, any more than it is our privilege, I have always considered the self-condemning spirit, to which such doubts are principally owing, as one of the most favourable symptoms of a nature spiritually renewed, and have many a time heard you make the same observation.

[*Torn off.*]

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Dec. 31, 1790.

Returning from my walk at half past three, I found your welcome messenger in the kitchen; and entering the study, found also the beautiful present with which you had charged him.* We have all admired it (for Lady Hesketh was here to assist us in doing so;) and for my own particular, I return you my sincerest thanks, a very inadequate compensation. Mrs. Unwin, not satisfied to send you thanks only, begs your acceptance likewise of a turkey, which, though the figure of it might not much embellish a counterpane, may possibly serve hereafter to swell the dimensions of a feather bed.

I have lately been visited with an indisposition much more formidable than that which I mentioned to you in my last—a nervous fever; a disorder to which I am subject, and which I dread above all others, because it comes attended by a melancholy perfectly insupportable. This is the first day of my complete recovery, the first in which I have perceived no symptoms

* A patch-work counterpane of her own making.

of my terrible malady; and the only drawback on this comfort that I feel is the intelligence contained in yours, that neither Mr. King nor yourself are well. I dread always, both for my own health and for that of my friends, the unhappy influences of a year worn out. But, my dear Madam, this is the last day of it; and I resolve to hope that the new year shall obliterate all the disagreeables of the old one. I can wish nothing more warmly than that it may prove a propitious year to you.

My poetical operations, I mean of the occasional kind, have lately been pretty much at a stand. I told you I believe, in my last, that Homer, in the present stage of the process, occupied me more intensely than ever. He still continues to do so, and threatens, till he shall be completely finished, to make all other composition impracticable. I have, however, written the mortuary verses as usual; but the wicked clerk for whom I write them has not yet sent me the impression. I transmit to you the long-promised Catharina; and were it possible that I could transcribe the others, would send them also. There is a way, however, by which I can procure a frank, and you shall not want them long.

I remain, dearest Madam,

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jan. 20, 1791.

Had you been a man of this world, I should have held myself bound, by the law of ceremonies, to have sent you long since my tribute of condolence. I have sincerely mourned with you; and though you have lost a wife, and I only a friend, yet

do I understand too well the value of such a friend as Mrs. Newton, not to have sympathised with you very nearly. But you are not a man of this world ; neither can you, who have both the Scripture and the Giver of Scripture to console you, have any need of aid from others, or expect it from such spiritual imbecility as mine. I considered, likewise, that receiving a letter from Mrs. Unwin, you, in fact, received one from myself, with this difference only,—that hers could not fail to be better adapted to the occasion, and to your own frame of mind, than any that I could send you.

[*Torn off.*]

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 2, 1791.

I am sick and ashamed of myself that I forgot my promise ; but it is actually true that I did forget it. You, however, I did not forget ; nor did I forget to wonder and to be alarmed at your silence, being myself perfectly unconscious of my arrears. All this, together with various other trespasses of mine, must be set down to the account of Homer ; and wherever he is, he is bound to make his apology to all my correspondents, but to you in particular. True it is, that if Mrs. Unwin did not call me from that pursuit, I should forget, in the ardour with which I persevere in it, both to eat and drink and retire to rest. This zeal has increased in me regularly as I have proceeded, and in an exact ratio, as a mathematician would say, to the progress I have made toward the point at which I have been aiming. You will believe this, when I tell you, that, not contented with my previous labours, I have actually revised the whole work, and have made a thousand alterations in it, since it has been in the

press. I have now, however, tolerably well satisfied myself at least, and trust that the printer and I shall trundle along merrily to the conclusion. I expect to correct the proof-sheets of the third book of the *Odyssey* to-day.

Thus it is, as I believe I have said to you before, that you are doomed to hear of nothing but Homer from me. There is less of gallantry than of nature in this proceeding. When I write to you, I think of nothing but the subject that is uppermost, and that uppermost is always Homer. Then I consider that though, as a lady, you have a right to expect other treatment at my hands, you are a lady who has a husband, and that husband an old schoolfellow of mine, and who, I know, interests himself in my success.

I am likely, after all, to gather a better harvest of subscribers at Cambridge than I expected. A little cousin of mine, an undergraduate of Caius' College, suggested to me, when he was here in the summer, that it might not be amiss to advertise the work at Merrill's the bookseller. I acquiesced in the measure; and at his return he pasted me on a board, and hung me in the shop, as it has proved in the event, much to my emolument. For many, as I understand, have subscribed in consequence, and among the rest several of the College libraries.

I am glad that you have seen the last Northampton dirge, for the rogue of a clerk sent me only half the number of printed copies for which I stipulated with him at first, and they were all expended immediately. The poor man himself is dead now; and whether his successor will continue me in my office, or seek another laureat, has not yet transpired.

I began with being ashamed, and I must end with being so. I am ashamed that, when I wrote by your messenger, I omitted to restore to you Mr. Martyn's letter. But it is safe, and shall be yours again. I am truly sorry that you have suffered so much

this winter by your old complaint the rheumatism. We shall both, I hope, be better in a better season, now not very distant; for I have never, myself, been free from my fever since the middle of January; neither do I expect to be released, till summer shall set me free.

I am, dear Madam,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 29, 1791.

It affords me sincere pleasure that you enjoy serenity of mind after your great loss. It is well in all circumstances, even in the most afflictive, with those who have God for their comforter. You do me justice in giving entire credit to my expressions of friendship for you. No day passes in which I do not look back to the days that are fled; and consequently, none in which I do not feel myself affectionately reminded of you, and of her whom you have lost for a season. I cannot even see Olney spire from any of the fields in the neighbourhood, much less can I enter the town, and still less the Vicarage, without experiencing the force of those mementos, and recollecting a multitude of passages, to which you and yours were parties.

The past would appear a dream, were the remembrance of it less affecting. It was in the most important respects so unlike my present moment, that I am sometimes almost tempted to suppose it a dream. But the difference between dreams and realities long since elapsed seems to consist chiefly in this,—that a dream, however painful or pleasant at the time, and perhaps for a few ensuing hours, passes like an arrow through the air,

leaving no trace of its flight behind it ; but our actual experiences make a lasting impression. We review those which interested us much, when they occurred, with hardly less interest than in the first instance ; and whether few years or many have intervened, our sensibility makes them still present ; such a mere nullity is time, to a creature to whom God gives a feeling heart and the faculty of recollection.

That you have not the first sight, and sometimes, perhaps, have a late one, of what I write, is owing merely to your distant situation. Some things I have written not worth your perusal ; and a few, a very few, of such length, that, engaged as I have been to Homer, it has not been possible that I should find opportunity to transcribe them. At the same time, Mrs. Unwin's pain in her side has almost forbidden her the use of the pen. She cannot use it long without increasing that pain ; for which reason I am more unwilling than herself that she should ever meddle with it. But, whether what I write be a trifle, or whether it be serious, you would certainly, were you present, see them all. Others get a sight of them, by being so, who would never otherwise see them ; and I should hardly withhold them from you, whose claim upon me is of so much older a date than theirs. It is not, indeed, with readiness and good-will that I give them to any body ; for, if I live, I shall probably print them ; and my friends, who are previously well acquainted with them, will have the less reason to value the book in which they shall appear. A trifle can have nothing to recommend it but its novelty. I have spoken of giving copies ; but, in fact, I have given none. They who have them made them ; for, till my whole work shall have fairly passed the press, it will not leave me a moment more than is necessarily due to my correspondents. Their number has of late increased upon me, by the addition of many of my maternal relations, who, having found me out about a year

since, have behaved to me in the most affectionate manner, and have been singularly serviceable to me in the article of my subscription. Several of them are coming from Norfolk to visit me in the course of the summer.

I enclose a copy of my last mortuary verses. The clerk, for whom they were written, is since dead; and whether his successor, the late sexton, will choose to be his own dirge-maker, or will employ me, is a piece of important news which has not yet reached me.

Our best remembrances attend yourself and Miss Catlett,* and we rejoice in the kind Providence that has given you, in her, so amiable and comfortable a companion.

Adieu, my dear friend—I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 24, 1791.

Considering the multiplicity of your engagements, and the importance, no doubt, of most of them, I am bound to set the higher value on your letters; and instead of grumbling that they come seldom, to be thankful to you that they come at all. You are now going into the country, where, I presume, you will have less to do; and I am rid of Homer. Let us try, therefore, if in the interval between the present hour and the next busy season, (for I, too, if I live, shall be probably occupied again,) we can continue to exchange letters more frequently than for some time past.

You do justice to me and Mrs. Unwin, when you assure

* Now Mrs. Smith.

yourself that to hear of your health will give us pleasure: I know not, in truth, whose health and well-being could give us more. The years that we have seen together will never be out of our remembrance; and so long as we remember them, we must remember you with affection. In the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, you have laboured in every possible way to serve us; and we must have a short memory indeed for the kindness of a friend, could we, by any means, become forgetful of yours. It would grieve me more than it does, to hear you complain of the effects of time, were not I also myself the subject of them. While he is wearing out you, and other dear friends of mine, he spares not me; for which I ought to account myself obliged to him, since I should otherwise be in danger of surviving all that I have over loved—the most melancholy lot that can befall a mortal. God knows what will be my doom hereafter; but precious as life necessarily seems to a mind doubtful of its future happiness, I love not the world, I trust, so much as to wish a place in it when all my beloved shall have left it.

You speak of your late loss in a manner that affected me much; and when I read that part of your letter, I mourned with you, and for you. But surely, I said to myself, no man had ever less reason to charge his conduct to a wife with any thing blame-worthy. Thoughts of that complexion, however, are no doubt extremely natural on the occasion of such a loss; and a man seems not to have valued sufficiently, when he possesses it no longer, what, while he possessed it, he valued more than life. I am mistaken, too, or you can recollect a time when you had fears, and such as became a Christian, of loving too much; and it is likely that you have even prayed to be preserved from doing so. I suggest this to you as a plea against those self-accusations, which I am satisfied that you do not de-

serve, and as an effectual answer to them all. You may do well, too, to consider, that had the deceased been the survivor, she would have charged herself in the same manner; and I am sure you will acknowledge, without any sufficient reason. The truth is, that you both loved at least as much as you ought, and I dare say had not a friend in the world who did not frequently observe it. To love just enough, and not a bit too much, is not for creatures who can do nothing well. If we fail in duties less arduous, how should we succeed in this, the most arduous of all?

I am glad to learn from yourself that you are about to quit a scene that probably keeps your tender recollections too much alive. Another place and other company may have their uses; and while your church is undergoing repair, its minister may be repaired also.

As to Homer, I am sensible that, except as an amusement, he was never worth my meddling with; but, as an amusement, he was to me invaluable. As such, he served me more than five years; and, in that respect, I know not where I shall find his equal. You oblige me by saying, that you will read him for my sake. I verily think that any person of a spiritual turn may read him to some advantage. He may suggest reflections that may not be unserviceable even in a sermon; for I know not where we can find more striking exemplars of the pride, the arrogance, and the insignificance of man; at the same time that, by ascribing all events to a divine interposition, he inculcates constantly the belief of a Providence; insists much on the duty of charity towards the poor and the stranger; on the respect that is due to superiors, and to our seniors in particular; and on the expedience and necessity of prayer and piety toward the gods; a piety mistaken, indeed, in its object, but exemplary for the punctuality of its performance. Thousands, who will

not learn from Scripture to ask a blessing either on their actions or on their food, may learn it, if they please, from Homer.

My Norfolk cousins are now with us. We are both as well as usual; and with our affectionate remembrances to Miss Catlett,

I remain, sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 23, 1791.

I did not foresee, when I challenged you to a brisker correspondence, that a new engagement of all my leisure was at hand;—a new, and yet an old one. An interleaved copy of my Homer arrived soon after from Johnson, in which he recommended it to me to make any alterations that might yet be expedient, with a view to another impression. The alterations that I make are indeed but few, and they are also short; not more, perhaps, than half a line in two thousand. But the lines are, I suppose, nearly forty thousand in all; and to revise them critically must consequently be a work of labour. I suspend it, however, for your sake, till the present sheet be filled, and that I may not seem to shrink from my own offer.

Mr. Bean has told me that he saw you at Bedford, and gave us your reasons for not coming our way. It is well, so far as your own comfortable lodging and our gratification were concerned, that you did not; for our house is brimful, as it has been all the summer, with my relations from Norfolk. We should all have been mortified, both you and we, had you been obliged, as you must have been, to seek a residence elsewhere.

I am sorry that Mr. Venn's labours below are so near to a conclusion. I have seen few men whom I could have loved more, had opportunity been given me to know him better. So, at least, I have thought as often as I have seen him. But when I saw him last, which is some years since, he appeared then so much broken, that I could not have imagined he would last so long. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy him, and Mr. Berridge, and yourself; who have spent, and, while they last, will continue to spend your lives, in the service of the only Master worth serving; labouring always for the souls of men, and not to tickle their ears, as I do. But this I can say—God knows how much rather I would be the obscure tenant of a lath-and-plaster cottage, with a lively sense of my interest in a Redeemer, than the most admired object of public notice without it. Alas! what is a whole poem, even one of Homer's, compared with a single aspiration that finds its way immediately to God, though clothed in ordinary language, or perhaps not articulated at all. These are my sentiments as much as ever they were, though my days are all running to waste among Greeks and Trojans. The night cometh when no man can work; and if I am ordained to work to better purpose, that desirable period cannot be very distant. My day is beginning to shut in, as every man's must, who is on the verge of sixty.

All the leisure that I have had of late for thinking has been given to the riots at Birmingham. What a horrid zeal for the church, and what a horrid loyalty to government, have manifested themselves there! How little do they dream that they could not have dishonoured their idol the Establishment more, and that the great Bishop of souls himself with abhorrence rejects their service! But I have not time to enlarge; breakfast calls

me; and all my post-breakfast time must be given to poetry.
Adieu!

Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Aug. 4, 1791.

Your last letter, which gave us so unfavourable an account of your health, and which did not speak much more comfortably of Mr. King's, affected us with much concern. Of Dr. Raitt we may say in the words of Milton :

His long experience did attain
To something like prophetic strain ;

for as he foretold to you, so he foretold to Mrs. Unwin, that, though her disorders might not much threaten life, they would yet cleave to her to the last; and she and perfect health must ever be strangers to each other. Such was his prediction, and it has been hitherto accomplished. Either head-ache or pain in the side has been her constant companion ever since we had the pleasure of seeing you. As for myself, I cannot properly say that I *enjoy* a good state of health, though in general I have it, because I have it accompanied with frequent fits of dejection, to which less health and better spirits would, perhaps, be infinitely preferable. But it pleased God that I should be born in a country where melancholy is the national characteristic. To say truth, I have often wished myself a Frenchman.

N. B. I write this in very good spirits.

You gave us so little hope in your last that we should have your company this summer at Weston, that to repeat our invi-

tation seems almost like teasing you. I will only say, therefore, that my Norfolk friends having left us, of whose expected arrival here I believe I told you in a former letter, we should be happy could you succeed them. We now, indeed, expect Lady Hesketh, but not immediately : she seldom sees Weston till all its summer beauties are fled, and red, brown, and yellow, have supplanted the universal verdure.

My Homer is gone forth, and I can devoutly say—Joy go with it ! What place it holds in the estimation of the generality, I cannot tell, having heard no more about it since its publication than if no such work existed. I must except, however, an anonymous eulogium from some man of letters, which I received about a week ago. It was kind in a perfect stranger, as he avows himself to be, to relieve me, at so early a day, from much of the anxiety that I could not but feel on such an occasion. I should be glad to know who he is, only that I might thank him.

Mrs. Unwin, who is this moment come down to breakfast, joins me in affectionate compliments to yourself and Mr. King; and I am, my dear Madam,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. KING.

DEAR SIR,

Sept. 23, 1791.

We are truly concerned at your account of Mrs. King's severe indisposition ; and though you had no better news to tell us, are much obliged to you for writing to inform us of it, and to Mrs. King for desiring you to do it. We take a lively interest in what concerns her. I should never have ascribed her silence to neglect, had she neither written to me herself.

nor commissioned you to write for her. I had, indeed, for some time expected a letter from her by every post, but accounted for my continual disappointment by supposing her at Edgware, to which place she intended a visit, as she told me long since, and hoped that she would write immediately on her return.

Her sufferings will be felt here till we learn that they are removed; for which reason we shall be much obliged by the earliest notice of her recovery, which we most sincerely wish, if it please God, and which will not fail to be a constant subject of prayer at Weston.

I beg you, Sir, to present Mrs. Unwin's and my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. King, in which you are equally a partaker, and to believe me, with true esteem and much sincerity,

Yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 21, 1791.

You could not have sent me more agreeable news than that of your better health, and I am greatly obliged to you for making me the first of your correspondents to whom you have given that welcome intelligence. This is a favour which I should have acknowledged much sooner, had not a disorder in my eyes, to which I have always been extremely subject, required that I should make as little use of my pen as possible. I felt much for you, when I read that part of your letter in which you mention your visitors, and the fatigue which, indisposed as you have been, they could not fail to occasion you. Agreeable as you would have found them at another time, and happy as you would have been in their company, you could not but feel the

addition they necessarily made to your domestic attentions as a considerable inconvenience. But I have always said, and shall never say otherwise, that if patience under adversity, and submission to the afflicting hand of God, be true fortitude—which no reasonable person can deny—then your sex have ten times more true fortitude to boast than ours; and I have not the least doubt that you carried yourself with infinitely more equanimity on that occasion than I should have done, or any he of my acquaintance. Why is it, since the first offender on earth was a woman, that the women are nevertheless, in all the most important points, superior to the men? That they are so, I will not allow to be disputed, having observed it ever since I was capable of making the observation. I believe, on recollection, that when I had the happiness to see you here, we agitated this question a little; but I do not remember that we arrived at any decision of it. The Scripture calls you the *weaker vessels*; and perhaps the best solution of the difficulty, therefore, may be found in those other words of Scripture—*My strength is perfected in weakness*. Unless you can furnish me with a better key than this, I shall be much inclined to believe that I have found the true one.

I am deep in a new literary engagement, being retained by my bookseller as editor of an intended most magnificent publication of Milton's Poetical Works. This will occupy me as much as Homer did for a year or two to come; and when I have finished it, I shall have run through all the degrees of my profession, as author, translator, and editor. I know not that a fourth could be found; but if a fourth can be found, I dare say I shall find it.

I remain, my dear Madam, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 16, 1791.

I am weary of making you wait for an answer, and therefore resolve to send you one, though without the lines you ask for. Such as they are, they have been long ready; and could I have found a conveyance for them, should have been with you weeks ago. Mr. Bean's last journey to town might have afforded me an opportunity to send them; but he gave me not sufficient notice. They must, therefore, be still delayed, till either he shall go to London again, or somebody else shall offer. I thank you for yours, which are as much better than mine, as gold is better than feathers.

It seemed necessary that I should account for my apparent tardiness to comply with the obliging request of a lady, and of a lady who employed you as her intermedium. None was wanted, as you well assured her. But had there been occasion for one, she could not possibly have found a better.

I was much pleased with your account of your visit to Cowslip Green; both for the sake of what you saw there, and because I am sure you must have been as happy in such company, as any situation in this world can make you. Miss More has been always employed, since I first heard of her doings, as becomes a Christian. So she was, while endeavouring to reform the un-reformable great; and so she is, while framing means and opportunities to instruct the more tractable little. Horace's *Virginibus, puerisque*, may be her motto; but in a sense much nobler than he has annexed to it. I cannot, however, be entirely reconciled to the thought of her being henceforth silent, though even for the sake of her present labours. A pen useful as hers ought not, perhaps, to be laid aside: neither, perhaps, will she

altogether renounce it, but when she has established her schools, and habituated them to the discipline she intends, will find it desirable to resume it.—I rejoice that she has a sister like herself, capable of bidding defiance to fatigue and hardship, to dirty roads and wet raiment, in so excellent a cause.

I beg that when you write next, to either of those ladies, you will present my best compliments to Miss Martha, and tell her that I can never feel myself flattered more than I was by her application. God knows how unworthy I judge myself, at the same time, to be admitted into a collection* of which you are a member. Were there not a crowned head or two to keep me in countenance, I should even blush to think of it.

I would that I could see some of the mountains which you have seen; especially, because Dr. Johnson has pronounced that no man is qualified to be a poet who has never seen a mountain. But mountains I shall never see, unless, perhaps, in a dream, or unless there are such in heaven. Nor those, unless I receive twice as much mercy as ever yet was shown to any man.

I am now deep in Milton, translating his Latin Poems for a pompous edition, of which you have undoubtedly heard. This amuses me for the present, and will for a year or two. So long, I presume, I shall be occupied in the several functions that belong to my present engagement.

Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as usual; always mindful of you, and always affectionately so. Our united love attends yourself and Miss Catlett.

Believe me most truly yours,

W. C.

* Of autographs.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Jan. 26, 1792.

Silent as I have long been, I have had but too good a reason for being so. About six weeks since, Mrs. Unwin was seized with a sudden and most alarming disorder, a vertigo, which would have thrown her out of her chair to the ground, had I not been quick enough to catch her while she was falling. For some moments her knees and ancles were so entirely disabled, that she had no use of them; and it was with the exertion of all my strength that I replaced her in her seat. Many days she kept her bed, and for some weeks her chamber; but, at length, has joined me again in the study. Her recovery has been extremely slow, and she is still feeble; but, I thank God, not so feeble but that I hope for her perfect restoration as the spring advances. I am persuaded that, with your feelings for your friends, you will know how to imagine what I must have suffered on an occasion so distressing, and to pardon a silence owing to such a cause.

The account you give me of the patience with which a lady of your acquaintance has lately endured a terrible operation, is a strong proof that your sex surpasses ours in heroic fortitude. I call it by that name, because I verily believe that, in God's account, there is more true heroism in suffering His will with meek submission, than in doing our own, or that of our fellow-mortals who may have a right to command us, with the utmost valour that was ever exhibited in a field of battle. Renown and glory are, in general, the incitements to such exertion; but no laurels are to be won by sitting patiently under the knife of a surgeon. The virtue, is therefore, of a less suspicious charac-

ter; the principle of it more simple, and the practice more difficult:—considerations that seem sufficiently to warrant my opinion, that the infallible Judge of human conduct may possibly behold with more complacency a suffering, than an active courage.

I forget if I told you that I am engaged for a new edition of Milton's Poems. In fact I have still other engagements; and so various, that I hardly know to which of them all to give my first attentions. I have only time, therefore, to condole with you on the double loss you have lately sustained, and to congratulate you on being a female; because, as such, you will, I trust, acquit yourself well under so severe a trial.

I remain,

my dear Madam,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 20, 1792.

When I wrote the lines in question, I was, as I almost always am, so pressed for time, that I was obliged to put them down in a great hurry. Perhaps I printed them wrong. If a full stop be made at the end of the second line, the appearance of inconsistency, perhaps, will vanish; but should you still think them liable to that objection, they may be altered thus:—

In vain to live from age to age
 We modern bards endeavour;
 But write in Patty's book one page,*
 You gain your point for ever.

Trifling enough, I readily confess they are; but I have always allowed myself to trifle occasionally; and on this occasion had not, nor have at present, time to do more. By the way, should you think this amended copy worthy to displace the former, I must wait for some future opportunity to send you them properly transcribed for the purpose.

Your demand of more original composition from me, will, if I live, and it please God to afford me health, in all probability be sooner or later gratified. In the mean time, you need not, and if you turn the matter in your thoughts a little, you will perceive that you need not, think me unworthily employed in preparing a new edition of Milton. His two principal poems are of a kind that call for an editor who believes the gospel, and is well grounded in all evangelical doctrine. Such an editor they have never had yet, though only such a one can be qualified for the office.

We mourn for the mismanagement at Botany Bay, and foresee the issue. The Romans were, in their origin, banditti; and if they became in time masters of the world, it was not by drinking grog, and allowing themselves in all sorts of licen-

* In the third volume of the Poems, the lines stand thus, on a farther suggestion of Lady Hesketh:—

In vain to live from age to age,
 While modern bards endeavour,
 I write my name in Ratty's page,
 And gain my point for ever.

W. COWPER.

March 6, 1792.

tiousness. The African colonization, and the manner of conducting it, has long been matter to us of pleasing speculation. God has highly honoured Mr. Thornton; and I doubt not that the subsequent history of the two settlements will strikingly evince the superior wisdom of his proceedings.

Yours,

W. C.

P.S. Lady Hesketh made the same objection to my verses as you; but she being a lady-critic, I did not heed her. As they stand at present, however, they are hers; and I believe you will think them much improved.

My heart bears me witness how glad I shall be to see you at the time you mention; and Mrs. Unwin says the same.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 4, 1792.

All our little world is going to London, the gulph that swallows most of our good things, and, like a bad stomach, too often assimilates them to itself. Our neighbours at the Hall go thither to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, as we lately called them, but now Sir John and my Lady, are no longer inhabitants here, but henceforth of Bucklands, in Berkshire. I feel the loss of them, and shall feel it, since kinder or more friendly treatment I never can receive at any hands, than I have always found at theirs. But it has long been a foreseen change, and was, indeed, almost daily expected long before it happened. The desertion of the Hall, however, will not be total. The second brother, George, now Mr. Courtenay,* intends to

* And since, Sir George Throckmorton.

reside there; and with him, as with his elder brother, I have always been on terms the most agreeable.

Such is this variable scene: so variable, that, had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connection; and, to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those who, like you, have God for their companion. Death cannot deprive them of Him, and he changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, you could not have endured the loss you mention. May He preserve me from a similar one; at least, till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again! Then, if ever that day come, it will make me equal to any burthen; but at present I can bear nothing well.

I am sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

March 8, 1792.

Having just finished all my Miltonic translations, and not yet begun my comments, I find an interval that cannot be better employed than in discharging arrears due to my correspondents, of whom I begin first a letter to you, though your claim be of less ancient standing than those of all the rest.

I am extremely sorry that you have been so much indisposed, and especially that your indisposition has been attended with such excessive pain. But may I be permitted to observe, that your going to church on Christmas-day, immediately after such

a sharp fit of rheumatism, was not according to the wisdom with which I believe you to be endued, nor was it acting so charitably toward yourself as I am persuaded you would have acted toward another. To another you would, I doubt not, have suggested that text—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice,"—as implying a gracious dispensation, in circumstances like yours, from the practice of so severe and dangerous a service.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, is better; but still wants much of complete restoration. We have reached a time of life when heavy blows, if not fatal, are at least long felt.

I have received many testimonies concerning my Homer, which do me much honour, and afford me great satisfaction; but none from which I derive, or have reason to derive, more than that of Mr. Martyn. It is of great use to me, when I write, to suppose some such person at my elbow, witnessing what I do; and I ask myself frequently—Would this please him? If I think it would, it stands: if otherwise, I alter it. My work is thus finished, as it were, under the eye of some of the best judges, and has the better chance to win their approbation when they actually see it.

I am, my dear Madam,

Affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 18, 1792.

We are now once more reduced to our dual state, having lost our neighbours at the Hall, and our inmate Lady Hesketh. Mr. Rose, indeed, has spent two or three days here, and is still with us; but he leaves us in the afternoon. There are

those in the world whom we love, and whom we are happy to see ; but we are happy likewise in each other, and so far independent of our fellow-mortals, as to be able to pass our time comfortably without them :—as comfortably, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indispositions, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit, When I am much distressed, any company but hers distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings ; though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise ; and by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure. —On the whole, I believe I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation to be determined by my own election ; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the total absence of the chief of all.

W—— called on me, I forget when, but about a year ago. His errand was to obtain from me a certificate of his good behaviour during the time he had lived with us. His conduct in our service had been such, for sobriety and integrity, as entitled him to it ; and I readily gave him one. At the same time, I confess myself not at all surprised that the family to which you recommended him soon grew weary of him. He had a bad temper, that always sat astride on a runaway tongue, and ceased not to spur and to kick it into all the sin and mischief that such an ungovernable member, so ridden, was sure to fall into. Whether he be a Christian, or not, is no business of mine to determine. There was a time when he seemed to have Christian experience, and there has been a much longer time in which, his attendance on ordinances excepted, he has manifested, I doubt, no one symptom of the Christian character. Prosperity did him harm ; adversity, perhaps, may do him good. I wish it may ; and if he be indeed a pupil of divine grace, it certainly

will, when he has been sufficiently exercised with it; of which he seems, at present, to have a very promising prospect.

Adieu, my dear friend. I remain affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 15, 1792.

I thank you for your remittance; which, to use the language of a song much in use when we were boys,

Adds fresh beauties to the spring,

And makes all nature look more gay.

What the author of the song had particularly in view when he thus sang, I know not; but probably it was not the sum of fifty pounds; which, as probably, he never had the happiness to possess. It was, most probably, some beautiful nymph,—beautiful in his eyes, at least,—who has long since become an old woman.

I have heard about my wether mutton from various quarters. First, from a sensible little man, curate of a neighbouring village;* then from Walter Bagot; then from Henry Cowper; and now from you. It was a blunder hardly pardonable in a man who has lived amid fields and meadows, grazed by sheep, almost these thirty years. I have accordingly satirized myself in two stanzas which I composed last night, while I lay awake, tormented with pain, and well dosed with laudanum. If you find them not very brilliant, therefore, you will know how to account for it.

* Rev. John Buchanan.

Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse,
 If, bound in rhyming tethers,
 He had committed this abuse
 Of changing ewes for wethers ;

But, male for female is a trope,
 Or rather bold misnomer,
 That would have startled even Pope,
 When he translated Homer.

Having translated all the Latin and Italian Miltonics, I was proceeding merrily with a Commentary on the Paradise Lost, when I was seized, a week since, with a most tormenting disorder ; which has qualified me, however, to make some feeling observations on that passage, when I shall come to it :

——— Ill fare our ancestor impure.

For this we may thank Adam ;—and you may thank him, too, that I am not able to fill my sheet, nor endure a writing posture any longer. I conclude abruptly, therefore ; but sincerely subscribing myself, with my best compliments to Mrs. Hill,

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR MR. BULL,

July 25, 1792.

Engaged as I have been ever since I saw you, it was not possible that I should write sooner ; and busy as I am at present, it is not without difficulty that I can write even now : but I promised you a letter, and must endeavour, at least, to be as good as my word. How do you imagine I have been occupied

these last ten days? In sitting, not on cockatrice eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humour, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would, therefore, bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days; and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over. You have now, I know, a burning curiosity to learn two things, which I may choose whether I will tell you or not. First, who was the painter; and secondly, how he has succeeded. The painter's name is Abbot. You never heard of him, you say. It is very likely; but there is, nevertheless, such a painter, and an excellent one he is. *Multa sunt quæ bonus Bernardus nec vidit, nec audivit.* To your second enquiry I answer, that he has succeeded to admiration. The likeness is so strong, that when my friends enter the room where the picture is, they start, astonished to see me where they know I am not. Miserable man that you are, to be at Brighton instead of being here, to contemplate this prodigy of art, which, therefore, you can never see; for it goes to London next Monday, to be suspended awhile at Abbot's; and then proceeds into Norfolk, where it will be suspended for ever.

But the picture is not the only prodigy I have to tell you of. A greater belongs to me; and one that you will hardly credit, even on my own testimony. We are on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very day se'nnight we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother bard, Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows where, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my friend, that we may have a safe going and return. It is a tremendous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I think of it. But a promise, made to him when he was here, that we would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that we can if we will, oblige us to it. The journey and

the change of air, together with the novelty to us of the scene to which we are going, may, I hope, be useful to us both ; especially to Mrs. Unwin, who has most need of restoratives. She sends her love to you and to Thomas, in which she is sincerely joined by

Your affectionate

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 30, 1792.

Like you, I am obliged to snatch short opportunities of corresponding with my friends ; and to write what I can, not what I would. Your kindness in giving me the first letter after your return, claims my thanks ; and my tardiness to answer it would demand an apology, if, having been here, and witnessed how much my time is occupied in attendance on my poor patient, you could possibly want one. She proceeds, I trust, in her recovery ; but at so slow a rate, that the difference made in a week is hardly perceptible to me, who am always with her. This last night has been the worst she has known since her illness—entirely sleepless till seven in the morning. Such ill rest seems but an indifferent preparation for a long journey, which we purpose to undertake on Wednesday, when we set out for Eartham, on a visit to Mr. Hayley. The journey itself will, I hope, be useful to her ; and the air of the sea, blowing over the South Downs, together with the novelty of the scene to us, will, I hope, be serviceable to us both. You may imagine that we, who have been resident on one spot so many years, do not engage in such an enterprise without some anxiety. Persons accustomed to travel, would make themselves merry with mine ;

it seems so disproportioned to the occasion. Once I have been on the point of determining not to go, and even since we fixed the day ; my troubles have been so insupportable. But it has been made a matter of much prayer, and at last it has pleased God to satisfy me, in some measure, that his will corresponds with our purpose, and that He will afford us his protection. You, I know, will not be unmindful of us during our absence from home ; but will obtain for us, if your prayers can do it, all that we would ask for ourselves—the presence and favour of God, a salutary effect of our journey, and a safe return.

I rejoiced, and had reason to do so, in your coming to Weston, for I think the Lord came with you. Not, indeed, to abide with me ; not to restore me to that intercourse with Him which I enjoyed twenty years ago ; but to awaken in me, however, more spiritual feeling than I have experienced, except in two instances, during all that time. The comforts that I had received under your ministry, in better days, all rushed upon my recollection ; and, during two or three transient moments, seemed to be in a degree renewed. You will tell me, that, transient as they were, they were yet evidences of a love that is not so ; and I am desirous to believe it.

With Mrs. Unwin's warm remembrances, and my cousin Johnson's best compliments, I am

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

P. S.—If I hear from you while I am abroad, your letter will find me at William Hayley's, Esq., Eartham, near Chichester. We purpose to return in about a month.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

DEAR MADAM,

Eartham, Sept. 1792.

Your two counsellors are of one mind. We both are of opinion that you will do well to make your second volume a suitable companion to the first, by embellishing it in the same manner; and have no doubt, considering the well-deserved popularity of your verse, that the expense will be amply refunded by the public.

I would give you, Madam, not my counsel only, but consolation also, were I not disqualified for that delightful service by a great dearth of it in my own experience. I too often seek, but cannot find it. Of this, however, I can assure you, if that may at all comfort you, that both my friend Hayley and myself most truly sympathise with you under all your sufferings. Neither have you, I am persuaded, in any degree lost the interest you always had in him, or your claim to any service that it may be in his power to render you. Had you no other title to his esteem, his respect for your talents, and his feelings for your misfortunes, must insure to you the friendship of such a man for ever. I know, however, there are seasons when, look which way we will, we see the same dismal gloom enveloping all objects. This is itself an affliction; and the worse, because it makes us think ourselves more unhappy than we are; and at such a season it is, I doubt not, that you suspect a diminution of our friend's zeal to serve you.

I was much struck by an expression in your letter to Hayley, where you say that you "will endeavour to take an interest in green leaves again." This seems the sound of my own voice reflected to me from a distance. I have so often had the same thought and desire; a day scarcely passes, at this season of the

year, when I do not contemplate the trees so soon to be stript, and say, "Perhaps I shall never see you clothed again." Every year, as it passes, makes this expectation more reasonable; and the year with me cannot be very distant, when the event will verify it. Well, may God grant us a good hope of arriving in due time where the leaves never fall, and all will be right!

Mrs. Unwin, I think, is a little better than when you saw her; but still so feeble as to keep me in a state of continual apprehension. I live under the point of a sword suspended by a hair. Adieu, my dear Madam; and believe me to remain your sincere and affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY,* WESTON-UNDERWOOD.

MY DEAR CATHARINA,

Eartham, Sept. 10, 1792.

I am not so uncourteous a knight as to leave your last kind letter, and the last I hope that I shall receive for a long time to come, without an attempt, at least, to acknowledge and to send you something in the shape of an answer to it; but having been obliged to dose myself last night with laudanum, on account of a little nervous fever, to which I am always subject, and for which I find it the best remedy, I feel myself this morning particularly under the influence of Lethean vapours, and, consequently, in danger of being uncommonly stupid!

You could hardly have sent me intelligence that would have gratified me more than that of my two dear friends, Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, having departed from Paris two days before the terrible 10th of August. I have had many anxious thoughts on their account; and am truly happy to learn that

* Now Lady Throckmorton.

they have sought a more peaceful region, while it was yet permitted them to do so. They will not, I trust, revisit those scenes of tumult and horror while they shall continue to merit that description. We are here all of one mind respecting the cause in which the Parisians are engaged; wish them a free people, and as happy as they can wish themselves. But their conduct has not always pleased us: we are shocked at their sanguinary proceedings, and begin to fear, myself in particular, that they will prove themselves unworthy, because incapable of enjoying it, of the inestimable blessings of liberty. My daily toast is, Sobriety and freedom to the French; for they seem as destitute of the former, as they are eager to secure the latter.

We still hold our purpose of leaving Eartham on the 17th; and again my fears on Mrs. Unwin's account begin to trouble me; but they are not quite so reasonable as in the first instance. If she could bear the fatigue of travelling then, she is more equal to it at present; and supposing that nothing happens to alarm her, which is very probable, may be expected to reach Weston in much better condition than when she left it. Her improvement, however, is chiefly in her looks, and in the articles of speaking and walking; for she can neither rise from her chair without help, nor walk without a support; nor read, nor use her needles. Give my love to the good Doctor, and make him acquainted with the state of his patient, since he, of all men, seems to have the best right to know it.

I am proud that you are pleased with the Epitaph I sent you, and shall be still prouder to see it perpetuated by the chisel. It is all that I have done since here I came, and all that I have been able to do. I wished, indeed, to have requited Romney for his well-drawn copy of me, in rhyme; and have more than once or twice attempted it: but I find, like the man in the fable, who could leap only at Rhodes, that verse is almost im-

possible to me, except at Weston.—Tell my friend George that I am every day mindful of him, and always love him; and bid him by no means to vex himself about the tardiness of Andrews.* Remember me affectionately to William, and to Pitcairn, whom I shall hope to find with you at my return; and should you see Mr. Buchanan, to him also.—I have now charged you with commissions enow, and having added Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, and told you that I long to see you again, will conclude myself,

My dear Catharina,
Most truly yours,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Oct. 14, 1792.

Your kind enquiries after mine and Mrs. Unwin's health will not permit me to be silent; though I am and have long been so indisposed to writing, that even a letter has almost overtaken me.

Your last but one found me on the point of setting out for Sussex, whither I went with Mrs. Unwin, on a visit to my friend, Mr. Hayley. We spent six weeks at Earham, and returned on the twentieth of September. I had hopes that change of air and change of scene might be serviceable both to my poor invalid and me. She, I hope, has received some benefit; and I am not the worse for it myself; but, at the same time, must acknowledge that I cannot boast of much amendment. The time we spent there could not fail to pass as agree-

* A stone-mason, who was making a pedestal for an antique bust of Homer.

ably as her weakness, and my spirits, at a low ebb, would permit. Hayley is one of the most agreeable men, as well as one of the most cordial friends. His house is elegant; his library large, and well chosen; and he is surrounded by the most delightful scenery. But I have made the experiment only to prove, what indeed I knew before, that creatures are physicians of little value, and that health and cure are from God only. Henceforth, therefore, I shall wait for those blessings from Him, and expect them at no other hand. In the mean time, I have the comfort to be able to tell you that Mrs. Unwin, on the whole, is restored beyond the most sanguine expectations I had when I wrote last; and that, as to myself, it is not much otherwise with me than it has been these twenty years; except that this season of the year is always unfavourable to my spirits.

I rejoice that you have had the pleasure of another interview with Mr. Martyn; and am glad that the trifles I have sent you afforded him any amusement. This letter has already given you to understand, that I am at present no artificer of verse; and that, consequently, I have nothing new to communicate. When I have, I shall do it to none more readily than to yourself.

My dear Madam,

Very affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Oct. 18, 1792.

I thought that the wonder had been all on my side, having been employed in wondering at your silence, as long as you

at mine. Soon after our arrival at Eartham, I received a letter from you, which I answered, if not by the return of the post, at least in a day or two. Not that I should have insisted on the ceremonial of letter for letter, during so long a period, could I have found leisure to double your debt; but while there, I had no opportunity for writing, except now and then a short one; for we breakfasted early, studied Milton as soon as breakfast was over, and continued in that employment till Mrs. Unwin came forth from her chamber, to whom all the rest of my time was necessarily devoted. Our return to Weston was on the nineteenth of last month, according to your information. You will naturally think that, in the interval, I must have had sufficient leisure to give you notice of our safe arrival. But the fact must have been otherwise. I have neither been well myself, nor is Mrs. Unwin, though better, so much improved in her health, as not still to require my continual assistance. My disorder has been the old one, to which I have been subject so many years, and especially about this season—a nervous fever; not, indeed, so oppressive as it has sometimes proved, but sufficiently alarming both to Mrs. Unwin and myself, and such as made it neither easy nor proper for me to make much use of my pen, while it continued. At present I am tolerably free from it; a blessing for which I believe myself partly indebted to the use of James's powder, in small quantities; and partly to a small quantity of laudanum, taken every night; but chiefly to a manifestation of God's presence vouchsafed to me a few days since; transient, indeed, and dimly seen, through a mist of many fears and troubles, but sufficient to convince me, at least while the Enemy's power is a little restrained, that He has not cast me off for ever.

Our visit was a pleasant one; as pleasant as Mrs. Unwin's weakness, and the state of my spirits, never very good, would

allow. As to my own health, I never expected that it would be much improved by the journey; nor have I found it so. Some benefit, indeed, I hoped; and perhaps, a little more than I found. But the season was, after the first fortnight, extremely unfavourable, stormy and wet; and the prospects, though grand and magnificent, yet rather of a melancholy cast, and consequently not very propitious to me. The cultivated appearance of Weston suits my frame of mind far better than wild hills that aspire to be mountains, covered with vast unfrequented woods, and here and there affording a peep between their summits at the distant ocean. Within doors all was hospitality and kindness, but the scenery *would* have its effect; and though delightful in the extreme to those who had spirits to bear it, was too gloomy for me.

Yours, my dear friend,

Most sincerely,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Nov. 5, 1792.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have finished the Sonnet which I told you I had begun, and sent it to Hayley, who is well pleased *therewith*, and has by this time transmitted it to whom it most concerns.*

I would not give the algebraist sixpence for his encomiums on my Task, if he condemns my Homer, which, I know, in point of language is equal to it, and in variety of numbers superior. But the character of the former having been some years established, he follows the general cry; and should Homer es-

* Sonnet to George Romney, Esq. on his picture of him in crayons.

tablish himself as well, and I trust he will hereafter, I shall have his warm suffrage for that also. But if not—it is no matter. Swift says somewhere,—There are a few good judges of poetry in the world, who lend their taste to those who have none: and your man of figures is probably one of the borrowers.

Adieu—in great haste. Our united love attends yourself and yours, whose I am most truly and affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Nov. 11, 1792.

I am not so sensible of your kindness in making me an exception from the number of your correspondents, to whom you forbid the hope of hearing from you till your present labours are ended, as to make you wait longer for an answer to your last; which, indeed, would have had its answer before this time, had it been possible for me to write. But so many have demands upon me of a similar kind, and while Mrs. Unwin continues an invalid, my opportunities of writing are so few, that I am constrained to incur a long arrear to some, with whom I would wish to be punctual. She can at present neither work nor read; and till she can do both, and amuse herself as usual, my own amusements of the pen must be suspended.

I, like you, have a work before me, and a work to which I should be glad to address myself in earnest, but cannot do it at present. When the opportunity comes, I shall, like you, be under a necessity of interdicting some of my usual correspondents, and of shortening my letters to the excepted few. Many letters and much company are incompatible with authorship, and the one as much as the other. It will be long, I hope, before

the world is put in possession of a publication, which you design should be posthumous.

Oh for the day when your expectations of my complete deliverance shall be verified ! At present it seems very remote : so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse with which I was favoured about a month since, has never been repeated ; and the depression of my spirits has. The future appears gloomy as ever ; and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push me headlong. Thus I have spent twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty years more. Long ere that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or woe will be decided.

Adieu, my dear friend. I have exhausted my time, though not filled my paper.

Truly yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dec. 9, 1792.

You need not be uneasy on the subject of Milton. I shall not find that labour too heavy for me, if I have health and leisure. The season of the year is unfavourable to me respecting the former ; and Mrs. Unwin's present weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. But the business is in no haste. The artists employed to furnish the embellishments are not likely to be very expeditious ; and a small portion only of the work will be wanted from me at once ; for the intention is to deal it out to the public piece-meal. I am,

therefore, under no great anxiety on that account. It is not, indeed, an employment that I should have chosen for myself; because poetry pleases and amuses me more, and would cost me less labour properly so called. All this I felt before I engaged with Johnson; and did, in the first instance, actually decline the service: but he was urgent; and, at last, I suffered myself to be persuaded.

The season of the year, as I have already said, is particularly adverse to me: yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other; but the approach of it always reminds me of the same season in the dreadful seventy-three, and in the more dreadful eighty-six. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions; nor is the Enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then, whether encreasing years have made me more liable to it, or despair, the longer it lasts, grows naturally darker, I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless He interpose powerfully in my favour, all may know.

I remain, my dear friend,

Most sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Jan. 31, 1793.

Io Pæan !

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Even as you foretold, so it came to pass. On Tuesday I received your letter, and on Tuesday came the pheasants ; for which I am indebted in many thanks, as well as Mrs. Unwin, both to your kindness and to your kind friend Mr. Copeman.

In Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell,—
 "Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well :"
 And when his clerkship's out, I wish him herds
 Of golden client's for his golden birds.

Our friends the Courtenays, have never dined with us since their marriage, *because* we have never asked them ; and we have never asked them, *because* poor Mrs. Unwin is not so equal to the task of providing for and entertaining company as before this last illness. But this is no objection to the arrival here of a bustard ; rather it is a cause for which we shall be particularly glad to see the monster. It will be a handsome present to *them*. So let the bustard come, as the Lord Mayor of London said to the hare, when he was hunting,—let her come, a' God's name : I am not afraid of her.

Adieu, my dear cousin and caterer. My eyes terribly bad ; else I had much more to say to you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 29, 1793.

Your tidings concerning the slender pittance yet to come, are, as you observe, of the melancholy cast. Not being gifted by nature with the means of acquiring much, it is well, however, that she has given me a disposition to be contented with little. I have now been so many years habituated to small matters, that I should probably find myself incommoded by greater; and may I but be enabled to shift, as I have been hitherto, unsatisfied wishes will never trouble me much. My pen has helped me somewhat; and after some years' toil, I begin to reap the benefit. Had I begun sooner, perhaps I should have known fewer pecuniary distresses; or, who can say? It is possible that I might not have succeeded so well. Fruit ripens only a short time before it rots; and man, in general, arrives not at maturity of mental powers at a much earlier period. I am now busied in preparing Homer for his second appearance. An author should consider himself as bound not to please himself, but the public; and so far as the good pleasure of the public may be learned from the critics, I design to accommodate myself to it. The Latinisms, though employed by Milton, and numbered by Addison among the arts and expedients by which he has given dignity to his style, I shall render into plain English; the rougher lines, though my reason for using them has never been proved a bad one, so far as I know, I shall make perfectly smooth; and shall give body and substance to all that is in any degree feeble and flimsy. And when I have done all this, and more, if the critics still grumble, I shall say the very deuce is in them. Yet, that they will grumble, I make no doubt; for, unreasonable as it is to do so, they all require something better

than Homer, and that something they will certainly never get from me.

As to the canal that is to be my neighbour, I hear little about it. The Courtenays of Weston have nothing to do with it, and I have no intercourse with Tyringham. When it is finished, the people of these parts will have to carry their coals seven miles only, which now they bring from Northampton or Bedford, both at the distance of fifteen. But, as Balaam says, who shall live when these things are done? It is not for me, a sexagenarian already, to expect that I shall. The chief objection to canals in general seems to be, that, multiplying as they do, they are likely to swallow the coasting trade.

I cannot tell you the joy I feel at the disappointment of the French; pitiful mimics of Spartan and Roman virtue, without a grain of it in their whole character.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

April 25, 1793.

Had it not been stipulated between us, that, being both at present pretty much engrossed by business, we should write when opportunity offers, I should be frightened at the date of your last: but you will not judge me, I know, by the unfrequency of my letters; nor suppose that my thoughts about you are equally unfrequent. In truth, they are not. No day passes in which you are excluded from them. I am so busy that I do not expect even now to fill my paper. While I write, my poor invalid, who is still unable to amuse herself either with book or needle, sits silent at my side; which makes me, in all my

letters, hasten to a conclusion. My only time for study is now before breakfast; and I lengthen it as much as I can, by rising early.

I know not that, with respect to our health, we are either better or worse than when you saw us. Mrs. Unwin, perhaps, has gained a little strength; and the advancing spring, I hope, will add to it. As to myself, I am, in body, soul, and spirit, *semper idem*. Prayer, I know, is made for me; and sometimes with great enlargement of heart, by those who offer it; and in this circumstance consists the only evidence I can find, that God is still favourably mindful of me, and has not cast me off for ever.

A long time since, I received a parcel from Dr. Cogshall, of New York; and, looking on the reverse of the packing-paper, saw there an address to you. I conclude, therefore, that you received it first, and at his desire transmitted it to me; consequently you are acquainted with him, and, probably, apprised of the nature of our correspondence. About three years ago I had his first letter to me, which came accompanied by half a dozen American publications. He proposed an exchange of books on religious subjects, as likely to be useful on both sides of the water. Most of those he sent, however, I had seen before. I sent him, in return, such as I could get; but felt myself indifferently qualified for such a negotiation. I am now called upon to contribute my quota again; and shall be obliged to you if, in your next, you will mention the titles of half a dozen that may be procured at little cost, that are likely to be new in that country, and useful.

About two months since, I had a letter from Mr. Jeremiah Waring, of Alton in Hampshire. Do you know such a man? I think I have seen his name in advertisements of mathematical works. He is, however, or seems to be, a very pious man.

I was a little surprised lately, seeing in the last Gentleman's Magazine a letter from somebody at Winchester, in which is a copy of the epitaph of our poor friend Unwin: an English, not a Latin one. It has been pleasant to me sometimes to think, that his dust lay under an inscription of my writing; which I had no reason to doubt, because the Latin one, which I composed at the request of the executors, was, as I understood from Mr. H. Thornton, accepted by them and approved. If they thought, after all, that an English one, as more intelligible, would therefore be preferable, I believe they judged wisely; but having never heard that they had changed their mind about it, I was at a loss to account for the alteration.

So now, my dear friend, adieu!—When I have thanked you for a barrel of oysters, and added our united kind remembrances to yourself, and Miss Catlett, I shall have exhausted the last moment that I can spare at present.

I remain sincerely yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 12, 1793.

You promise to be contented with a short line, and a short one you must have, hurried over in the little interval I have happened to find between the conclusion of my morning task and breakfast. Study has this good effect, at least: it makes me an early riser, who might otherwise, perhaps, be as much given to dozing as my readers.

The scanty opportunity I have, I shall employ in telling you what you principally wish to be told—the present state of mine and Mrs. Unwin's health. In her I cannot perceive any altera-

tion for the better ; and must be satisfied, I believe, as indeed I have great reason to be, if she does not alter for the worse. She uses the orchard-walk daily, but always supported between two, and is still unable to employ herself as formerly. But she is cheerful, seldom in much pain, and has always strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God.

As to myself, I have always the same song to sing—Well in body, but sick in spirit : sick, nigh unto death.

Seasons return, but not to me returns
 God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
 Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
 Or joy, or hope, or Jesus' face divine ;
 But cloud, &c.

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tone, and accompany him through the whole passage, on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his ; but time fails me.

I feel great desire to see your intended publication ; a desire which the manner in which Mr. Bull speaks of it, who called here lately, has no tendency to allay. I believe I forgot to thank you for your last poetical present : not because I was not much pleased with it, but I write always in a hurry, and in a hurry must now conclude myself, with our united love,

Yours, my dear friend,
 Most sincerely,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Aug. 2, 1793.

The Bishop of Norwich has won my heart by his kind and liberal behaviour to you ; and, if I knew him, I would tell him so.

I am glad that your auditors find your voice strong and your utterance distinct; glad, too, that your doctrine has hitherto made you no enemies. You have a gracious Master, who, it seems, will not suffer you to see war in the beginning. It will be a wonder, however, if you do not, sooner or later, find out that sore place in every heart which can ill endure the touch of apostolic doctrine. Somebody will smart in his conscience, and you will hear of it. I say not this, my dear Johnny, to terrify, but to prepare you for that which is likely to happen, and which, troublesome as it may prove, is yet devoutly to be wished; for, in general, there is little good done by preachers till the world begins to abuse them. But understand me aright. I do not mean that you should give them unnecessary provocation, by scolding and railing at them, as some, more zealous than wise, are apt to do. That were to deserve their anger. No; there is no need of it. The self-abasing doctrines of the gospel, will, of themselves, create you enemies; but remember this, for your comfort—they will also, in due time, transform them into friends, and make them love you, as if they were your own children. God give you many such; as, if you are faithful to his cause, I trust he will!

Sir John and Lady Throckmorton have lately arrived in England, and are now at the Hall. They have brought me from Rome a set of engravings on Odyssey subjects, by Flaxman, whom you have heard Hayley celebrate. They are fine, very much in the antique style, and a present from the Dowager Lady Spencer.

Ever yours,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Weston, Oct. 22, 1793.

You are very kind to apologize for a short letter, instead of reproaching me with having been so long entirely silent. I persuaded myself, however, that while you were on your journey, you would miss me less as a correspondent than you do when you are at home, and therefore allowed myself to pursue my literary labours only, but still purposing to write as soon as I should have reason to judge you returned to London. Hindrances, however, to the execution even of that purpose, have interposed; and at this moment I write in the utmost haste, as indeed I always do, partly because I never begin a letter till I am already fatigued with study, and partly through fear of interruption before I can possibly finish it.

I rejoice that you have travelled so much to your satisfaction. As to me, my travelling days, I believe, are over. Our journey of last year was less beneficial, both to Mrs. Unwin's health and my spirits, than I hoped it might be; and we are hardly rich enough to migrate in quest of pleasure merely.

I thank you much for your last publication, which I am reading, as fast as I can snatch opportunity, to Mrs. Unwin. We have found it, as far as we have gone, both interesting and amusing; and I never cease to wonder at the fertility of your invention, that, shut up as you were in your vessel, and disunited from the rest of mankind, could yet furnish you with such variety, and with the means, likewise, of saying the same thing in so many different ways.*

Sincerely yours,

W. C.

* The publication alluded to is entitled, "Letters to a Wife; written during three voyages to Africa, from 1750 to 1754. By the Author of *Cardiphonia*."

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dec. 10, 1793.

You mentioned, my dear friend, in your last letter, an unfavourable sprain that you had received, which you apprehended might be very inconvenient to you for some time to come; and having learned also from Lady Hesketh the same unwelcome intelligence, in terms still more alarming than those in which you related the accident yourself, I cannot but be anxious, as well as my cousin, to know the present state of it; and shall truly rejoice to hear that it is in a state of recovery. Give us a line of information on this subject, as soon as you can conveniently, and you will much oblige us.

I write by morning candle-light; my literary business obliging me to be an early riser. Homer demands me: finished, indeed, but the alterations not transcribed; a work to which I am now hastening as fast as possible. The transcript ended, which is likely to amount to a good sizeable volume, I must write a new preface; and then farewell to Homer for ever! And if the remainder of my days be a little gilded with the profits of this long and laborious work, I shall not regret the time that I have bestowed on it.

I remain, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours,

W. C.

Can you give us any news of Lord Howe's Armada; concerning which we may enquire, as our forefathers did of the Spanish,—“*An in cœlum sublata sit, an in Tartarum depressa?*”

THE END.

1. K



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